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## **HEARTS APART: THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL MIGRATION ON THE LIFE OF LEFT-BEHIND FILIPINO ADOLESCENTS**

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### **Abstract**

*This descriptive study delved into the impact of parental migration to the academic, emotional, social and spiritual life of left-behind Filipino adolescents. Awareness on the reality of the situation of the left-behinds in different aspects of their life could be of great help to their carers and teachers in creating a meaningful and healthy environment that is facilitative of their growth as persons despite the absence of their biological parent/s. A survey using a researcher's made questionnaire, mental ability and personality tests as well as interview and the respondents' scholastic records were utilized in this study. Findings revealed that across the three groups of research participants (those with Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) father, those with OFW mother, and those with both parents abroad), all of them have good grades in school despite no parent/s assisting them to do their home works and projects plus the additional responsibilities at home for some of them. However, majority of the participants expressed that they feel deeply sad, longing for the physical presence of their parents, though they do not feel rejected and abandoned. For them, it is a tiresome cycle of adjustment every time their parent/s come/s home and then later leave/s them again to work abroad. Prayers continue to bind the Filipino families together despite physical distance. This study concludes that parents should support not just the economic, but also the psychological and the spiritual needs of their left-behind children to help them to cope well with the adversaries of life,*

*thus keeping them away from vices and behavioral problems. Future study shall include more number of participants from different cultures to better see the significance of these findings in many varied family experiences of the adolescent left-behinds.*

## **Keywords**

Parental Migration, Left-Behinds, Adolescents, Needs

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## **1. Introduction**

Parents leaving their homes to work abroad becomes a common universal experience of many of the families nowadays primarily due to material poverty. While the Family Code of the Philippines in Executive Order No. 209 series of 1987 emphasizes authority and responsibility of parents which include the caring for and rearing of the children for civic consciousness and efficiency and for their holistic development and well-being (Officialgazettegovph.,2017), migration of parents seems to be inevitable in the situation of some Filipino families nowadays. Such family set-up affects the left-behind children in many different ways, and researches are being conducted to know how exactly they are being affected so that the carers and care givers of these left-behind children would know how to somehow fill in the roles and responsibilities of the father and/or the mother while being left at home to assist in the growth and development of the left-behind children.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs state that the physiological needs of a person should be met first before one can proceed to satisfying his/her psychological needs and finally reach self-actualization. (Simplypsychologyorg 2017) The migration theory of Ernest Ravenstein calls it push and pull when the parents are pushed to migrate to another country to earn for a living (pull). Ravenstein believed that migration happens due to poor job opportunities inside one's place but there is the availability of better external economic opportunities (Jrankorg,2017). While parents deemed to address the economic concerns of their respective families, the psychological needs of the family members which is equally important is often overlooked or neglected. The evolutionary theory of attachment of Bowlby, Harlow, and Lorenz suggests that children come into the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others, social beings as they are. Such will help them to survive. The determinant of attachment is not food, but care and responsiveness. (Simplypsychologyorg.,2017).

While some studies focused on the effects of parental migration to the life of young children at school age in many countries, this present study specifically looked into the impact of parental migration to the academic, emotional, social and spiritual life of the left-behind adolescents in

Filipino context. This study investigated the effects of having parents who are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) from four to seventeen years to the life of their left-behind children aging fifteen to eighteen years old. Adolescence is a very crucial stage in one's life because this is when the person is neither a child nor an adult. The absence of parents or carers in this particular period of one's development may be very stressful which might result to use of coping and defense mechanisms. (Scieloorgza.,2017). This is when one is searching for his or her own identity. Thus, active parental guidance is very necessary.

In the present article, the author presents the impact of parental migration in the four aspects (academic, emotional, social and spiritual) of life of the three different groups of left-behind adolescent children in the Filipino context. Using the researcher's made questionnaire, mental ability and personality tests, interview, and the respondents' scholastic records, the following findings are discussed based on the objectives of this research.

## 2. Theoretical Background

This paper investigated the impact of parental migration to the academic, emotional, social and spiritual life of the left-behinds Filipino adolescent children.

Figure 1 below shows Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Bingcom,2017) which states that the physiological needs of the person should be met first before he/she could be able to satisfy his/her psychological needs, and eventually reach self-actualization.

The situation of OFW families is a clear picture of this theory. While some are able to satisfy their physiological needs because of economic gains brought about by higher income, some of the psychological needs like belongingness and love are half-met if not met at all because of the physical distance of the family members. Many if not all parents with economic concerns torn into this dilemma of being able to provide for the material versus the psychological needs of their children which requires the presence of parents in the life of their adolescent children.



Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This is a descriptive research which describes the similarities and differences of the impact of parental migration to the academic, emotional, social, and spiritual life across the three different groups of the left-behinds adolescent children. This design is used in the different fields of study because of its applicability to address varied kinds of research problems (Alicay, 2014). Further, the descriptive method of research seeks to provide information about one or more variables. It is used to answer questions on “what exists.” This question can be answered in one or two ways: using quantitative methods and/or qualitative methods (Research-methodologynet, 2017).

This research used both the quantitative and the qualitative methods of data analysis. A survey with a researcher’s made questionnaire was used to gather data. Psychological tests were also utilized to measure the school ability and the personality of the research participants. An interview was also employed in this study.

#### **3.2 Research Population**

This study purposively chosen 30 research participants with age ranging from 15 to 18 years old wherein ten are adolescents whose father is an OFW, ten are with OFW moms, and another 10 respondents with both parents who are OFW. Their parent/s work/s abroad for four to seventeen years already. An informed consent was distributed to the target participants prior to the administration of the survey questionnaire. However, only 16 out of 30 responded positively to the invitation of participating in the research. The survey questionnaire was administered to 16 respondents wherein 5 are males and 11 are females. Further, only one participant agreed to be interviewed. Overall, there are seventeen (17) actual participants of this research.

#### **3.3 Research Instrument**

A researcher’s made survey questionnaire was used to gather data about the positive and the negative effects of parental migration to the emotional, social, spiritual and academic life of the left-behinds adolescent children. The questionnaire includes questions about the nature of parental absence, length of time of parental absence, and the nature of family support of the respondents plus questions about the experiences as well as the positive and the negative effects of parental migration to the academic, emotional, social and spiritual life of the respondents as they experienced them.

The interview guide was made similar to the questions in the survey questionnaire.

Psychological tests were also utilized to assess the school ability and the personality of the respondents. Among the standardized tests used are the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT)

level G, 7th edition, the Gordon Personal Profile (GPP), and the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). OLSAT is designed to measure the student's ability to learn and succeed in school, while GPP is used to four aspects of personality which are significant in the daily functioning of the normal person namely ascendancy, responsibility, emotional stability and sociability. LSI is designed to help the students determine the way they prefer to learn.

### **3.4 Data Gathering Procedure and Statistical Treatment**

To quickly spot the potential respondents of this research, an initial survey was conducted. Afterwards, a pre-test of the questionnaire was done with participants having the same characteristics with the target actual respondents of the research. The filled-out researcher's made questionnaire was scrutinized for corrections and enhancement. When the enhanced questionnaire is ready to be used, the survey was administered to the target participants. The sixteen actual respondents answered the survey questionnaire.

This study utilized descriptive statistical tools in analyzing the data gathered from the research participants through survey. The responses of one research participant in an interview were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The present study uniquely discusses the experiences of left-behind adolescent children in the context of Filipinos, and it features the very essential though not so much talked about topic in other researches--the social and the spiritual aspects of life of the adolescent left-behinds.

### **4.1 Impact to Academic Life**

While money is a vehicle to send their children to school, the OFW parents make a lot of sacrifices to be able to produce professionals in the family. The professional competitiveness in the global arena is so stiff nowadays that bachelor's degree is not even enough anymore. Filipinos believe that education is a means to conquer poverty. While the absence of a parent or both parents may reduce parental care for their left-behind children, the positive effect of parental migration is increase in income due to remittances (Orguk,2017). The results of the study conducted by Robilla (2012) revealed that the more pressured the children are economically and materially speaking, the lesser is their tendency to achieve academically because of lower mental or psychological functioning, and lesser life satisfaction. For the OFW left-behinds in this study with varied learning styles, having enough material resources to use for their studies reinforces academic achievement.

The situation of OFW families is a clear picture of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Simply psychologyorg, 2017). While some are able to satisfy their physiological needs because of economic gains brought about by higher income, some of the psychological needs like belongingness and love are half-met if not met at all because of the physical distance of the family members. Many if not all parents with economic concerns torn into this dilemma between being able to provide for the material and the psychological needs of their children which requires the presence of parents in the life of their adolescent children.

OFW parents usually compensate their physical presence with the material things they provide their left-behind children which results for their children to develop a consumerist attitude (Uniceforg,2017). These children are usually the kind of left-behinds who tend to be one-day millionaires, spending too much, buying their wants luxuriously.

Table 4.1.3 below of the present study shows that 87.5% of the research participants said that they can pay all the fees in school, having OFW parent/s. 56.25% find it hard to do their extra responsibilities at home like doing household chores while 43.75% do not. Also, 87.5% do not find their responsibilities in school and at home conflicting. Further, findings revealed that across the three groups of research participants (those with OFW father, those with OFW mother, and those with both parents abroad), all of them have good grades as shown in Table 4.1.1 wherein their General Weighted Average ranges from Satisfactory to Outstanding. This is despite of the results of their mental ability test shown in Table 4.1.2 that ranges from Low to Average. The results imply that the research participants are overachievers.

Such result of the present study is different from the findings of Lu et al (2015) which says that the children with parents working abroad had approximately 0.9 lesser years in school than their peers which implies that these children are more likely to stop their formal education after middle school.

Moreover, the research of Jampaklay (2006) revealed that when the mother is absent at home for so long a time, the possibility is that the left-behind children will no longer be able to go to school, unlike when the father is not around even for a long time (Antman, 2012). The results imply that the roles of the mother at home is irreplaceable. This finding is also not evident in the present study because all the participants of this research in three different groups (with either mom or dad who is OFW, and with both parents working abroad) excelled academically. The research finding of Dreby & Stutz, 2011 say that mother's migrations affect the educational goals of their children in varied ways depending on whether they migrate alone or with their husbands. In this study, it shows

that success in school could be achieved regardless of whether the student is with his/her father only, or with mother only at home, or with only siblings and other relatives to take care of them at home.

Further, children of unmarried migrant mothers are motivated to excel more in their academics because they invest in their mothers’ migrations as a sacrifice. However, the emotional consequences of parental absences lower the educational aspirations of children with both parents in the USA. (Dreby & Stutz, 2011)

Though left-behind children make their parent/s’ sacrifices abroad an inspiration to study harder on their own, they still long for parents to guide them. The interviewee expressed “gusto ko po sanang maranasan na tinuturuan ng magulang sa aking mga takdang aralin tulad ng ibang mga batang kumpleto ang pamilya (*I wish to experience being assisted by my parents in doing my homework like the other children with complete family members.*)”

**Table 1:** *Distribution of Respondents According to their General Weighted Average (GWA), First Semester, School Year 2016-2017*

GWA	Description	f	%
90-100	Outstanding	2	12.5
85-89	Very Satisfactory	10	62.5
80-84	Satisfactory	4	25
75-79	Fairly Satisfactory	0	0
Below 75	Did not meet expectations	0	0
	Total	16	100

**Table 2:** *Distribution of Respondents According to their Mental Ability*

Interpretation	f	%
Superior	0	0
Above Average	0	0
Average	7	43.75
Below Average	8	50
Low	1	6.25
Total	16	100

**Table 3:** Effects of Parental Migration to Academic Life based on the Survey Results

Question Number	Respondents' Responses						Interpretation
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>NA</u>		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
2	16	100	0	0	0	0	They can pay all the fees in school.
7	9	56.25	7	43.75	0	0	They find it hard to do their extra responsibilities at home like doing the household chores.
9	2	12.5	14	87.5	0	0	They don't find their responsibilities in school and at home conflicting.

#### 4.2 Impact to Emotional Life

In Table 2.2.2 below, majority of the research participants have become emotionally closer to their OFW mother which made them miss their mothers the more. 75-81.25% of them revealed to be feeling deeply sad and longing for the physical presence of their parents, though 50-56.25% of them do not feel rejected and abandoned. 62.5% said it is a tiresome cycle of adjustment every time their parent/s come/s home and then later leave/s them again. Further, 68.75% expressed that they feel alone and envious seeing a family with complete family members. This is consistent with the findings of Uniceforg (2017) that migration of parents is indeed heartbreaking for children. The left-behind children usually experience longing for parental care, confusion over gender boundaries and reversal of gender roles, and vulnerability to abuses.

The respondent in the interview affirmed that oftentimes she wishes “*sana nandito rin ngayon ang mom ko (I wish my mom is also here with us now)*...” everytime she sees a family eating or strolling together. But she said, she just got used to the situation that is why she does not feel rejected, neither abandoned.

Researches likewise found the negative effects of parental migration to the emotional life of the left-behind adolescents. Smeekens, C., Stroebe, M. S., & Abakoumkin, G., 2012 who conducted a study with adolescents in the Philippines found that left-behind adolescents particularly with OFW mom reported to have poorer physical health than those with both parents at home. They have a high level of missing their parent/s and feel emotionally lonelier. Emotional loneliness and stress due to parental absence were associated with poorer health. This is consistent with the findings of de Brauw & Mu, 2011 in Lu et al, 2015 which revealed that parents' migration has also been shown to have a negative impact on the dietary health of the left-behind children. In homes where parents had



migrated for work, less time spent by the caretakers in preparing and buying food which may have resulted in lower quality and smaller amounts of food consumed by left-behind children. The study of Cordova & de Asis, 2014 found that left-behind children showed intense longing for their mothers, constricted feelings of sadness and anger, faulty communication with fathers and misplaced concept of discipline.

In addition, Gao, Y., et. al., 2013 found that adolescents whose mothers migrate from home to work elsewhere are at elevated risk for smoking. Improving self-efficacy may be an effective means to keep adolescents away from smoking, especially for those with maternal migration.

Gao, Y., et. al., 2010 found that parental migration is a risk factor for unhealthy behaviors among adolescent school children in rural China. Adolescents with a parent abroad, particularly the mother, reported poorer physical health than those with both parents at home. The parent-abroad adolescents reported a high level of missing their parent/s and felt emotionally lonelier than the parent-at-home group.

In the study of Chen, S., et. al, 2013, parental absence may also have a negative influence on the psychological development of left-behind children. Such finding is not evident in the participants of this study. Shown in Table 5, 93.75% of the participants of the present study confessed that drinking liquor is not a coping mechanism for them, and nobody among the participants was tempted to take prohibited drugs to cope with loneliness. On the other hand, the personality test results of the participants in Table 4 show their vulnerability to vices as coping mechanism to loneliness, having seventy-five percent (75%) of them who seem to be emotionally unstable or with poor emotional balance. Fifty percent (50%) of the participants are sociable which may have helped them a lot in coping with loneliness. It is good to note how these adolescent left-behinds have transcended their being overly dependent and having lack of sense of responsibility. Having OFW parent/s have remarkably trained them to be responsible persons as shown in Table 3.

Interviewee said “gusto ko po sana talaga nasa bahay ang aking magulang para masaya. Nalulungkot po talaga ako kapag wala ang nanay ko sa bahay. Kapag may problema ako, sinasarili ko na lang po, hindi ko na lang po sinasabi sa kanila para hindi na makadagdag ng alalahanin sa kanila. (*I wish my parent is at home. I feel sad when my mother is not home. I just keep to myself when I have problems. I don't tell them anymore because I don't want to add to their worries.*)”

Indeed, familial separation can profoundly influence the roles, support structures, and responsibilities of *members* of transnational families, resulting to psychological and emotional stress. (Unisaacza, 2017).

**Table 4: Personality Test Results**

Respondents' Category	Gordon Personality Profile (GPP)	f	%
A (with OFW father)	<i>Sociable</i>	3	18.75
	Passive	2	12.5
	<i>lack of sense of responsibility</i>	4	25.00
	<i>with poor emotional balance</i>	3	18.75
	active	1	6.25
	tends to rely on others	1	6.25
	<i>overly dependent</i>	3	18.75
	Emotionally stable	1	6.25
	overly dependent	1	6.25
	with emotional control	1	6.25
B (with OFW mother)	<i>Sociable</i>	3	18.75
	<i>passive</i>	5	31.25
	<i>unable to stick to tasks</i>	3	18.75
	<i>with poor emotional balance</i>	5	31.25
	overly dependent	1	6.25
	<i>with general restriction in social contacts</i>	3	18.75
	reliable	2	12.50
	lacks sense of responsibility	2	12.50
	emotionally stable	1	6.25
	active but sometimes passive	1	6.25
	Passive	2	12.50

C (both parents are OFW)	<i>overly dependent</i>	3	18.75
	<i>lacks sense of responsibility</i>	3	18.75
	<i>with poor emotional balance</i>	4	25.00
	with general restriction in social contacts	2	12.50
	Active	2	12.50
	reliable	2	12.50
	sociable	2	12.50
	emotionally stable	1	12.50
sociable but prefers to work alone	1	12.50	

**Table 5:** Effects of Parental Migration to the Emotional Life based on the Survey Results

Question Number	Respondents' Responses						Interpretation
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>NA</u>		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
13	13	81.25	2	12.5	1	6.25	They have become emotionally closer to their mother.
15	5	31.25	10	62.5	1	6.25	They did not become emotionally distant from their mother.
17	12	75.00	4	25.00	0	0	There are times that they feel deeply sad, longing for their mother's physical presence.
18	13	81.25	1	6.25	2	12.50	There are times that they feel deeply sad, longing for their father's physical presence.
19	6	37.50	9	56.25	1	6.25	They don't feel rejected and abandoned having a mother working away from home.
20	4	25.00	8	50.00	4	25.00	They don't feel rejected and abandoned having a mother working away from home.
22	0	0	15	93.75	1	6.25	Drinking liquor is not a coping mechanism for them when they feel lonely about their OFW parent/s.

23	0	0	16	100	0	0	Nobody among them was tempted to take prohibited drugs to cope with loneliness.
24	2	12.50	10	62.50	4	25.00	They don't even go for a boy-girl relationship which their parents do not know.
26	10	62.50	5	31.25	1	6.25	It's a tiresome cycle of adjustment every time their parent/s arrive/s at home then later leave them again.
29	10	62.50	4	25.00	2	12.50	They feel alone when they see families with complete family members.
30	11	68.75	4	25.00	1	6.25	They feel envious with those families with complete family members.

### **4.3 Impact to Social Life**

Parental migration has both the positive and the negative effects to the social life of the left-behind adolescents as shown in the following research findings.

Lee, 2011 in Lu et al, 2015 found that in rural China, left-behind children were shown to place greater value on social popularity than their peers did and were more likely to care about school grades and to seek their parents' praise than the children who resided with their parents. Lu et al (2015) found that the more supervision or attention children receive from their parents, the more they care about parents' attitudes toward them. This demonstrates the importance of parenting style and parent-child interaction on the well-being of the left-behind children.

Likewise, Chae, S., Hayford, S. R., & Agadjanian, V. (2016) found that father's migration delays home-leaving for adolescent girls and that these effects are not mediated by school enrolment. The father's migration delays girls' marriage.

Results of the present study shown in Table 6 below reveal that the participants have become more responsible persons, and majority of them have communicated more often with their parent/s than when they were physically together. Further, Table 4 shows that fifty-six point twenty-five percent (56.25%) of the participants are sociable, 25% are active, while the rest tends to be passive. Eighty-one point twenty-five percent (81.25%) tends to be overly dependent, having lack of sense of responsibility and unable to stick to tasks at hand, and the remaining few tend to be reliable. Left-behind children tend to be less socially adjusted which is true to 50% of the participants of this study (uniceforg, 2017)

In the interview, this female left-behind adolescent confided that “Marami naman akong kaibigan. Lahat sila masayang kasama. Kapag may problema ako, yung iba kong kaibigan ang nasasabihan ko. Kaya lang dapat din talagang piliin ang sasamahang kaibigan kasi yung iba hindi mabuti ang naidudulot sa akin. (I have actually lots of friends. I always have fun when I am with them. I tend to share *my problems with some of my friends. However, I have to choose the kind of friends I would go with because some of them do not influence me positively.*)”

**Table 6:** Effects of Parental Migration to the Social Life based on the Survey Results

Question Number	Respondents' Responses						Interpretation
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>		<u>NA</u>		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
10	16	100	0	0	0	0	They have become responsible persons now.
11	14	87.50	2	12.50	0	0	They talk with their mother now than when they were physically together.
12	12	75.00	4	25.00	0	0	They talk with their father now than when they were physically together.

#### 4.4 Impact to Spiritual Life

Prayerfulness is one of the positive traits the Filipinos have. Survey results of the present study reveal that majority (56.25% - 68.75%) of the research participants shared that they pray with and for each other even when the family members are not physically together. They usually include in their prayers the safety of each other and the abundance of blessings to come their way.

Spirituality plays a significant role in positive youth development because it promotes an integrated moral and civic identity that leads the youth to develop into an adult who engages in and contributes positively to the self, family and society. (Mansukhani & Resurreccion, 2009) Prayerful adolescents are away from temptations and vices.

The interviewee said “mahirap ang walang magulang sa tabi lalo na kapag may problema. Kaya sa Diyos ako tumatawag kapag gulung gulo ang isip ko at wala akong mapaghingahan ng problema ko. (It is difficult to be alone, without parents beside me especially during moments of problems. That is why I always call upon God especially during those moments that I am confused and I have no one to turn to.)”

Adolescence is a period that carries enormous physical, emotional, psychological and social transformations (Scieloorgza, 2017). Even in a research conducted by Asis and Marave, (2013) with children, results suggest for the need to provide the left-behind children with both the economic and psychological support to enhance the chances that they will be doing well in school. Family has a very important role in the formation of one's identity. Filipino adolescents form a positive identity in the family context based on connection, support, and autonomy. (Santiago, M., Mansukhani, R. & Resurreccion, R., 2009)

Existing researches like that of Robila, 2010 found that higher economic pressure was associated with higher desire for migration, lower parenting quality and higher child psychological distress. On the other hand, higher satisfaction with migration was associated with higher quality of parenting, higher child psychosocial functioning and academic achievement.

Lahaie, C., et., al. (2009) found that households where respondents have a spouse who was a caregiver and who migrated to USA are more likely to have at least one child with academic, behavioral and emotional problems than non-migrant households.

Further, Chen et al, 2013 revealed that higher levels of parental emotional support are significantly related to higher academic aspirations across all models. Parental expectations seem to be positively correlated with children's academic aspirations: children expected to rank among the top ten in class have over two years higher academic aspirations compared to children whose parents do not have any expectations.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The present study reveals the impact of parental migration to the different aspects of life of the left-behind Filipino adolescents. Though the intension of parents working abroad is good, providing for the material needs of their children is not enough especially those with very young and adolescent children who need most guidance from their parents. Academically, the left-behind adolescents may do good, but emotionally, the loneliness and longing for the physical presence of their parents will always be there no matter how the children would convince themselves that their parents are working abroad for them to have a better life. Leaving the children with carers who could somehow substitute the role of the parents would be better. Rearing the left-behind children with good social skills and with deep spiritual foundation would help them cope with life's adversaries better, thus will keep them away from vices and behavioral problems.

The findings of Jampaklay (2006) and Lu et al (2015) are not evident in the present study because the adolescent left-behinds in this study do excel academically despite having no parent/s to assist them in doing assignments, projects and in studying their lessons at home. However, the fallback on the emotional aspect of life of the adolescent left-behinds is also noted in the present study which is parallel to the research findings of Smeekens, et al (2012), and Cordova & de Asis (2014). Negative emotions such as loneliness may lead the left-behinds to unhealthy behaviors like drinking and smoking as they are very vulnerable to such vices as their way of coping. Such findings of Gao, et al (2013), Gao et al (2010) and Chen (2013) are also evident in the present study.

Unique in this paper is the curiosity in looking into the social and spiritual aspects of life of the adolescent left-behinds. The results of the study conducted by Lee (2011) in Lu et al (2015) as well as that of Chae et al. (2016) and Zhao et al. (2016) are parallel with the findings of the present study. Social beings as they are, the social skills of the adolescent left-behinds are greatly influenced by their experiences with the family members at home. Missing their parent/s made them intensify their communication with their parents and strengthen their social life with friends to combat loneliness and boredom. Likewise, when problems strike them badly, aside from seeking help from their friends around, asking the help of God through prayers is one best practice of the Filipino left-behind adolescents.

For future studies in this area, it is suggested that more research participants will get involve especially those coming from different cultures to better see the significance of the findings of the present study in many varied family experiences of adolescent left-behinds.

In rural China for example, the authors argue that there are underlying socio-cultural explanations about the economic motives for migration like making contributions to social events (weddings and funerals) in village life and fulfilling social obligations for left-behind sons' futures. Parents migrate to save for sons', but not daughters', adult lives. (Zhang et al, 2016)

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