



Generational Metamorphosis: Lived Experiences of Married Millennials towards Lifetime Commitment

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Abstract

This study addresses the lived experiences of married millennials towards lifetime commitment, mainly focusing on the different perceptions, challenges, and coping strategies within marital relationships. This study, conducted in Barangay Mamatid, Cabuyao City, Laguna, Philippines, adopts a qualitative phenomenological research design with thematic analysis as the treatment of data; process involves interview, taking notes, and a voice recording, all conducted with participants' consent. This study aims to thoroughly explore the generational shifts, experiences, interventions, coping mechanisms, and strategies of married millennial couples who are married for ten (10) years and above, and whose age ranges from twenty-eight (28) to forty three (43) years. This study provides a comprehensive understanding on commitment as a fundamental part of marital relationships.

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1. Introduction

There are small changes happening in the Philippines in the way marriage and family structures work, but these changes are not exactly the same as what happens in Western cultures. People still value traditional marriage, but cohabitation and other alternative family arrangements are becoming more and more common. Even though the country has strong religious and cultural ties to traditional marriage, there are signs of a change, especially among the younger generations. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) ^[4] cited that the number of unofficial unions has been growing over the past ten years, while the number of marriages has been steadily

going down. This suggests that the way people think about marriage and living together is changing, with economic factors, better education, and more exposure to global cultural trends all playing a role. These changes show that younger Filipinos are having a bigger mindset shift about how they think about relationships. Compared to traditional beliefs, they are putting more value on individual freedom and financial security.

Millennials, in particular, have unique ideas about marriage and living together. They put a lot of value on the personal growth and happiness that come from relationships, rather than the usual social or economic reasons for getting married. Duplito (2024) ^[1] deduced that compared to how older generations thought about living together and getting married, today's generation sees living together as a practical way to see if two people are compatible before getting married.

People's marriage patterns are always changing, and this has important social and economic effects that need to be looked at right away. Esteban et al (2020) ^[2] reiterated that even though the overall divorce rate has gone down a little, about 40% of marriages still end in divorce. This problem affects not only people but also larger societal structures, such as the safety of children and the economy. Pew Research Center (2019) claimed that only 44% of Millennials had married, indicating that marriage is not a typical choice for this generation. Instead, more Millennials are opting to cohabit and have children without getting married, reflecting a change in societal norms and values. People's thoughts and actions are changing so quickly that it

makes these issues even more important. Policies that support solid family structures and the well-being of society must also change quickly as well.

Given the possible social consequences of these revolutionary perspectives on marriage and cohabitation, it is important that thorough research be done on the topic. This research provides critical insights that may inform a range of educational and policy initiatives. It is essential for understanding the manner in which these altering attitudes impact the idea of family and personal connections. In addition, by studying Millennials, a generation that is at the forefront of changing relationship norms, this investigation could offer valuable insights into future trends in family dynamics and stability. This could therefore help educators, politicians, and social planners create solutions that meet the needs of modern cultures.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

The researchers will use a phenomenological research design to understand and analyze the shared experiences of participants in experiencing a particular concept or phenomenon. Understanding Millennials' views and difficulties with commitment is essential for dealing with modern relationship problems, as they often navigate marriage in a constantly changing social and cultural environment. Phenomenology allows researchers to delve into the complexities of Millennials' experiences inside their marriage. This method ultimately helps in gaining a detailed understanding of the intricacies present in the marriage dynamics of Millennials, providing useful perspectives for professionals, decision-makers, and people looking to enhance and uphold relationships among this group.

B. Research Locale

This study will be conducted in Mamatid, Cabuyao City, Laguna, a barangay in the province of Laguna, Philippines. Mamatid is a vibrant and diverse community that reflects a mix of urban and suburban lifestyles, making it an ideal setting for exploring the lived experiences of married millennials. Its population consists of individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds, which provides a rich cultural and social environment for understanding the complexities of marriage commitment within this generation. The decision to focus on Mamatid stems from the researchers' familiarity with the local community, its dynamics, and its residents' shared experiences of cultural traditions and modern influences. This familiarity will facilitate rapport-building with participants, ensuring a level of comfort and trust that is essential for candid and in-depth qualitative interviews.

By narrowing the geographic scope to this specific barangay, the study seeks to capture insights from married millennials within a defined context, allowing for a deeper exploration of how local social structures, community interactions, and shared cultural norms shape their attitudes and behaviors towards marital commitment. The unique blend of traditional Filipino values and the influence of contemporary millennial perspectives in this locale will provide a nuanced understanding of the generation's approach to relationships and marriage.

C. Participants of the study

The participants of the study are only those married Millennials residing in Mamatid Cabuyao City, Laguna. This study aims to explore the unique perspectives and

experiences regarding their commitment within their marriages. These participants are chosen specifically from the millennial generation, which specifically ranges from 28 to 43 years old, and have been married for a minimum of ten (10) years. By focusing on this demographic within a specific geographic location and marital duration, the research seeks to gain insightful understanding of the complex ways that relationship dynamics, personal beliefs, and cultural shifts affect people's attitudes and actions on marriage commitment. Through qualitative interviews or other research methods, this study shall provide valuable data that can inform discussions on contemporary dynamics of marriage, relationship preparation, and commitment within the millennial generation. The researchers' familiarity with the local context and community dynamics will help in building rapport with participants, leading to more in-depth and candid responses.

D. Sampling Design

Barangay Mamatid has a population of 61,085 as of the 2020 census. The study will select five (5) married residents of Barangay Mamatid, City of Cabuyao, Laguna using purposeful sampling. Ravitch and Carl (2019) state that purposeful sampling involves choosing specific individuals and research settings to collect the necessary information for addressing research inquiries. This sampling method ensures that participants have the required experiences and perspectives to provide valuable insights on the topic of research, including their opinions on marital commitment and how it differs from previous generations. The study delves deeper into the unique challenges, attitudes, and relationships that shape marital commitment in the millennial generation by specifically selecting participants from this age group.

E. Research Instrumentation

This research will utilize a self-constructed interview form composed of ten (10) open-ended questions designed to gather in-depth qualitative data. These questions will aim to elicit detailed insights and experiences from the participants, aligning with the objectives of the study. Each question will be carefully crafted to encourage participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives in a natural and unrestricted manner, fostering richer responses.

To ensure the content validity of the instrument, the interview form will undergo a rigorous review process by qualitative research experts. These experts will assess the questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Their feedback will help refine the questions, ensuring they are free of bias, ambiguities, and leading language, while remaining sensitive to the participants' cultural and personal contexts.

The interview process will follow a structured protocol to maintain consistency while allowing for flexibility in follow-up questions when clarification or elaboration is needed. During the interview, researchers will actively listen and use neutral prompts to encourage participants to expand on their responses where necessary. Participants' responses will be documented in detail, either through note-taking or by audio recording (with participants' consent), ensuring accuracy and thoroughness in capturing the data.

The use of open-ended questions allows the participants to freely express their thoughts and insights, promoting a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This approach aligns with the qualitative nature of the study, focusing on capturing rich, nuanced data reflective of the participants' lived experiences.

F. Data gathering procedure

After the validation of the research instrument, the researchers will proceed with the data collection process. To ensure the reliability and clarity of the research instrument, a pilot interview will first be conducted with a small number of participants who meet the study's inclusion criteria. The pilot interview aims to identify potential issues with the questions or interview flow, allowing the researchers to make necessary adjustments before the main data collection. Feedback from the pilot interview will be carefully analyzed, and any modifications to the instrument or procedure will be implemented to enhance the overall quality of the research.

Once the pilot interview has been completed and the instrument refined, the main data collection process will begin. The first step is to ensure that all participants are well-informed about the research objectives, procedures, and any potential risks or benefits associated with their participation. To achieve this, the researchers will provide each participant with a comprehensive informed consent form. This form will outline the purpose of the study, the expected duration of participation, the confidentiality of responses, and the participants' right to withdraw at any point. Participants will be asked to review this document carefully and provide their signed consent to indicate their voluntary agreement to participate in the study.

Once consent has been obtained, the researchers will focus on building rapport with the participants. Establishing a sense of trust is critical to ensuring open and honest communication during the interview. To facilitate this, researchers may engage in brief introductory discussions and express genuine interest in participants' perspectives.

Following the rapport-building phase, the researchers will conduct an oral interview with each participant. This interview will be designed to gather in-depth qualitative data that aligns with the research objectives. During the interview, open-ended questions will be posed to encourage participants to share their thoughts, experiences, and insights in their own words.

After data collection, the researchers will use a thematic analysis approach to analyze the interview data. This involves identifying and coding recurring themes, patterns, or concepts within participants' responses. Thematic analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of the data, providing insights into key themes and underlying factors relevant to the study's focus.

G. Ethical Consideration

The researchers will take into account the informed consent of every participant prior to the interview. It includes the main focus and aim of the research along with the data collection methodology; the participants' identities are safeguarded to protect their views and opinions. Moreover, researchers take into account all references to potential risks associated with study involvement and acknowledge participants' right to withdraw from the study voluntarily.

The researchers will also give every participant a detailed explanation about the purpose and reasoning behind the study. According to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, also known as Republic Act No. 10173, it is required to ensure the security of personal information and data confidentiality to the best of one's ability. The researchers will receive a formal letter signed and approved by the cooperative's Chairperson, allowing them to collect data and conduct interviews. The researchers will also make sure that all participants willingly take part in the study and the gathered information will be kept private.

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative research study that explored the lived experiences of married millennials in relation to lifetime commitment. The aim of the research was to analyze the participants' responses to interview questions and identify key themes that emerged from their narratives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of millennial marriages and the factors influencing these relationships. Participants shared their unique perspectives, revealing that many views their marriages as harmonious and fulfilling, attributing this to values such as patience, mutual understanding, emotional regulation, and collaboration. Important contributions from their partners, such as financial stability, quality time, and consistent support, were noted as significant factors contributing to marital satisfaction. Participants also highlighted their own contributions, including managing household responsibilities, teaching values to their children, and demonstrating adaptability in difficult times. These responses reflect millennial marriages as partnerships rooted in equality, shared responsibilities, and intentional efforts to maintain long-term satisfaction.

Key themes that emerged from the data include mutual support and companionship, provision and emotional support, shared investments in relationship quality, and reinforcing commitment through shared efforts. Mutual support and companionship emphasized how millennial marriages thrive on emotional connection and teamwork, with spouses being both partners and friends, characterized by emotional regulation, patience, and camaraderie. Provision and emotional support highlighted the collaborative nature of millennial couples, where both financial stability and emotional care are equally prioritized, redefining commitment beyond traditional gender roles. Shared investments in relationship quality underscored the intentional efforts couples make, such as managing finances and creating meaningful experiences, to strengthen their bonds and ensure emotional and practical stability. Reinforcing commitment through shared efforts focused on how couples actively navigate challenges by working together, such as through collaborative problem-solving and offering emotional support, demonstrating that commitment is reinforced by mutual efforts during difficult times. Participants also emphasized the importance of conflict resolution and emotional control, where emotional intelligence and constructive communication, such as staying calm during disagreements, are central to maintaining relational harmony and respect. The theme of adjusting to personality differences in conflict resolution illustrated how millennials use self-awareness, emotional regulation, and humor to prevent conflicts from escalating, while remaining adaptable to individual differences.

In handling external influences on marriage commitment, millennials actively manage pressures from societal expectations, social media, and family, ensuring trust and harmony through transparency and boundaries. Navigating traditional and modern marriage expectations reflected how millennials reconcile evolving societal norms with their personal beliefs, balancing traditional practices with modern values, such as cohabitation before marriage. For many millennials, viewing marriage as a pathway to personal fulfillment demonstrated how marriage supports not only relational but also individual aspirations, integrating personal growth with shared goals. Finally, the theme of consistent effort in relationship maintenance emphasized that millennials view marriage as a dynamic, ongoing process

requiring continuous effort through open communication, shared faith, and acts of care to maintain long-term stability. In conclusion, millennial marriages are marked by adaptability, mutual respect, and emotional fulfillment. The themes of mutual support, shared investments, and conflict resolution reveal a shift toward flexible, egalitarian partnerships. By blending modern values with traditional ideals, millennial couples redefine commitment as an active, collaborative process that prioritizes emotional connection, shared responsibilities, and personal growth. These findings offer valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of marriage among millennials and provide perspectives for strengthening modern relationships.

4. Discussion

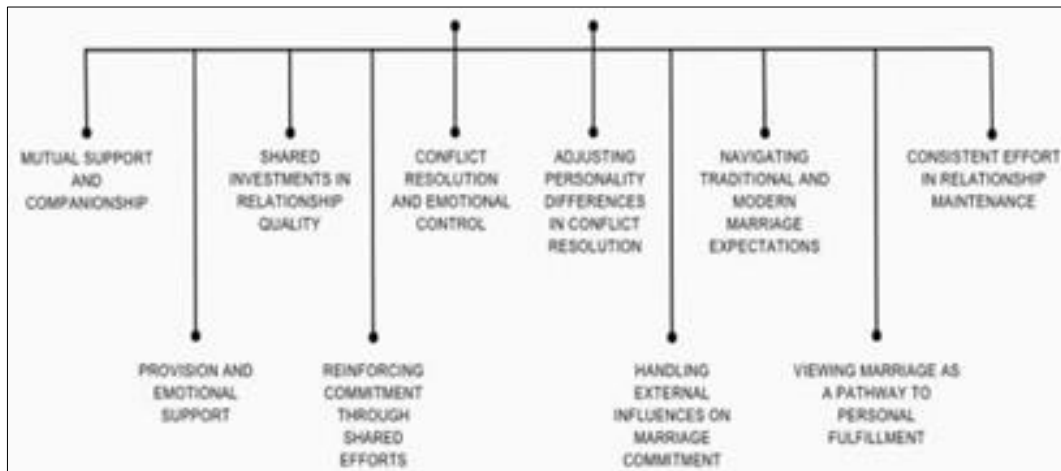


Fig 1: Generational Metamorphosis: Lived Experiences of Married Millennials Towards Lifetime Commitment.

Figure 1 shows the interconnected themes that emerged from the lived experiences of married millennials, highlighting their approaches to achieving and sustaining lifetime commitment. The figure illustrates how millennials navigate the complexities of marital relationships by balancing emotional, financial, and relational aspects. It emphasizes foundational elements like mutual support and companionship and provision and emotional support, which underpin marital satisfaction and stability.

Additionally, Figure 1 reflects the active efforts couples make to sustain their bond, as seen in shared investments in relationship quality and consistent effort in relationship maintenance, where deliberate actions and shared responsibilities help nurture the marriage. Conflict management is also a significant focus, with themes like conflict resolution and emotional control and adjusting personality differences in conflict resolution, demonstrating how couples address disagreements while embracing individual differences.

The figure also accounts for external and societal influences on marriage, and is mainly highlighted within handling external influences regarding marital commitment and navigating traditional and modern marriage expectations, which reveal how couples manage external pressures and generational shifts in values. Lastly, viewing marriage as a pathway to personal fulfillment underscores how millennials associate marriage with emotional stability, personal growth, and life satisfaction. Overall, Figure 1 provides a comprehensive thematic map that encapsulates the various dimensions of commitment, serving as a foundation for

The study highlights how millennial couples approach marital commitment by integrating modern values with traditional ideals, placing emphasis on emotional connection, shared responsibilities, and adaptability. Themes such as mutual support, financial and emotional contributions, and consistent effort emerged as central to their relationships. Millennials view marriage as an equal partnership built on teamwork, patience, and emotional regulation, departing from traditional, rigid roles. Practical and emotional investments, such as managing finances and creating meaningful experiences, reflect their focus on collaboration and mutual respect. Additionally, millennials actively navigate conflicts through emotional intelligence, communication, and adaptability, ensuring relational harmony.

understanding how married millennials navigate and sustain their marital relationships External influences such as social media dynamics, societal expectations, and family pressures also shape millennial marriages. Participants emphasized the importance of transparency, trust, and boundary- setting to protect their relationships from external stressors. They also grapple with balancing traditional and modern marital expectations, including cohabitation, family planning, and shifting gender roles. Despite these pressures, millennials demonstrate resilience by aligning shared values, openness, and faith with their relationships. This generational transformation reflects a shift from viewing marriage as a societal obligation to a pathway for personal fulfillment, emotional stability, and shared growth.

These findings inspired the creation of the CLASP Program: Communication Mastery, Love in Action, Adaptability in Differences, Shared Vision and Goals, and Partnership Resilience. Each component of the program addresses the key themes identified, equipping millennial couples with tools to strengthen their relationships. For example, communication mastery fosters emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, while love in action emphasizes tangible expressions of care. Adaptability in differences helps couples navigate personality conflicts, and shared vision and goals align their aspirations. Partnership resilience offers strategies to overcome challenges and external pressures. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive framework for fostering emotional intimacy, collaboration, and long-term stability in modern marriages.

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