



The Lived Experiences of Batang Saytek Students with Tiger Parents at Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of Batang Saytek students at Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School raised in tiger parenting households. As an output of the study, a program aimed to assist both students and parents is suggested to address the unique challenges and emotional dynamics uncovered in the study was proposed.

The research design used was qualitative with phenomenology as an approach. Using the interpretative phenomenological approach, the study generated ten emerging themes which were (1) Academic Pressure and Workload, (2) Parental Control over Hobbies, (3) Influence of Parental Expectations on Personal Choices, (4) Pressure and Internalized Expectations, (5) Sense of Fulfillment vs. Disappointment, (6) Parental Restrictions Affecting Social Interactions, (7) Parental Acknowledgment of Success, (8) Constraints and Structure from Parental Rules, (9) Coping Mechanisms for Academic and Parental Expectations, and (10) Long-Lasting Effects of Parental Discipline and Behavior.

These themes collectively highlight the intricate challenges faced by students raised in tiger parenting households, including the emotional strain and limited autonomy resulting from high parental expectations and strict rules. Recognizing the dual role of tiger parenting as both a source of guidance and a challenge, the study underscores the necessity for interventions that promote understanding and foster a healthier parent-child dynamic. The findings emphasize how these pressures influence students' academic performance, social interactions, and coping mechanisms, shaping their emotional resilience and long-term development. This study underscores the importance of understanding the nuanced impact of tiger parenting on adolescent well-being and calls for initiatives that foster healthy communication and mutual understanding between parents and children.

Keywords: Tiger Parenting, Science-School Students, Batang Saytek Students

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development and economic growth worldwide. Globally, education systems vary widely in structure, curriculum, delivery methods, assessment techniques, and support services for students with diverse cultural, social, and economic contexts in which they operate. Despite these differences in educational systems around the world are several common goals - such as ensuring access to quality education for all individuals regardless of background - and principles that underpin them. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) is the primary government agency responsible for the country's basic education system. DepEd's vision is to provide quality basic education accessible to all Filipinos, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become productive members of

society as stated in the DepEd Recent Orders (2020).

One of the DepEd's flagship program is the K to 12 Basic Education Program. Terrell (2023) mentioned that K-12, is a term used in education and educational technology in the United States, Canada and some other countries, it is a short form for the publicly supported school grades before college. These grades are kindergarten (K) and first through 12th grade (1-12). (If the term were used, 13th grade would be the first year of college) It was fully implemented in 2018. This program introduced two additional years to the basic education curriculum, making it more aligned with international standards and better preparing students for higher education or the workforce.

Specialized schools focusing on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education have emerged as part of this educational reform. (These science schools, such as Sta. Rosa Science and Technology High School is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in STEM subjects and equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. Widya, Rifandi, and Rahmi (2019) all stated science schools typically offer advanced courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and other related subjects. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education is essential to producing students prepared for problem-solving, critical analysis, and collaborative approaches to address the needs of the 21st century. They align with DepEd's goal of providing quality and relevant education that prepares Filipino students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

DepEd's primary goal of providing quality education accessible to all Filipino children is a cornerstone of its mission. This aligns with parents' aspirations to ensure their children receive the best education regardless of their background or circumstances. Parents view education as a fundamental right and a pathway to a better future, and they are committed to supporting their children's educational journey to achieve this goal. They want their children to excel academically and develop into well-rounded individuals capable of facing life's challenges with confidence and resilience.

Parents worldwide often adopt different parenting styles based on their beliefs, values, and cultural norms. These styles influence how they approach their children's education and significantly shape their educational outcomes.

In the context of science schools, where the curriculum is often rigorous and demanding, parents may feel additional pressure to adopt a tiger parenting approach to ensure that their children meet the high academic standards set by the school. They may believe this strict parenting style is necessary to help their children succeed in a challenging educational environment and secure a successful future.

This study intends to understand how the rigorous academic environment of science high schools interacts with the pressures of tiger parenting and how this combination affects students' academic performance, mental health, and social relationships. By exploring these lived experiences, the researchers aim to provide insights that could inform educational practices and parental strategies, ultimately supporting high-achieving students' well-being and academic success.

Additionally, the study has the potential to initiate programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by these students, contributing to a deeper understanding of their

unique challenges and proposing interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of high academic pressure and strict parenting.

Existing studies on tiger parenting have primarily focused on younger children or college students, with limited research addressing its impact on high school students. Furthermore, most research on tiger parenting has been conducted in Western contexts, with a need for studies examining its effects in the Philippine setting. This study aims to address these gaps by focusing on high school students in a science high school in the Philippines, providing valuable insights into the intersection of tiger parenting and the unique educational environment of a science school. By exploring the experiences of these students, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on tiger parenting and its impact on adolescent development. Moreover, this study aims to provide insights that can inform interventions and support systems for students experiencing high levels of pressure and stress from tiger parenting, particularly in the context of science schools. Overall, this study has the potential to advance our understanding of the complexities of tiger parenting and its effects on high school students in science schools, thereby contributing to the broader fields of education and psychology.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of science and technology students at Sta. Rosa Science and Technology High School raised by tiger parents. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the research aims to understand how students perceive and are affected by strict parenting styles. By interpreting students' beliefs, feelings, and perceptions, the study uncovers the nuanced impact of tiger parenting on their academic, emotional, and social lives, offering valuable insights into their unique challenges and experiences.

B. Research Locale

The research locale for this study is Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School, located in Santa Rosa, Laguna. It is a secondary public science high school system located on J.P Rizal Blvd. Barangay Market Area, Santa Rosa City, Laguna, in the P Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School is renowned for its outstanding students, advanced facilities, and innovative educational programs.

C. Population and Sampling

The researchers focus on science and technology students enrolled in the Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School for the school year 2024-2025. We distributed a validated, and a reliable survey questionnaire from these high school students into two sections of each grade (7, 8, 9, and 10) to identify students living with tiger parenting.

The researchers conducted a purposive sampling design. Purposive sampling is a sampling design that is not intended to offer a representative sample but rather to hone in on particular phenomena and processes cited by Rubin and Rubin (1995). Through purposive sampling, the researchers identified the students from the survey responses who met the criteria for living with tiger parents.

D. Research Instrumentation

The study used a semi-structured interview guide as the

primary research instrument to gather in-depth qualitative data on the lived experiences of high school students at Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School with tiger parents. A pre-survey questionnaire served as a secondary tool, using closed-ended questions to identify students from tiger parenting households by assessing their home environment, parental interactions, and perceptions of control and expectations. The pre-survey's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.829, indicating strong internal consistency and ensuring its effectiveness in identifying relevant participants.

E. Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure for this study is conducted in several key steps to ensure the collection of comprehensive and meaningful data.

Before proceeding with the survey distribution to identify participants living in a tiger parenting household, the researchers initiate the informed consent process. Informed consent forms are distributed to both the students and their parents or legal guardians.

Pre-Survey

The researchers developed a comprehensive survey questionnaire that included closed-ended questions. The survey was designed to identify students who were living in a tiger parenting household, based on their responses to specific questions related to their home environment, parental interactions, and perceptions of parental control and expectations.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, a statistician reviewed and validated the survey.

Interview

The semi-structured interview process was carefully designed to explore the lived experiences of students, focusing on their unique perspectives as individuals navigating the challenges of studying in a science-focused high school while living in a tiger parenting household. This approach allowed participants to elaborate on their pre-survey responses and provide rich, detailed narratives about their day-to-day experiences, emotions, and coping strategies. The interview questions were developed to cover a wide range of topics, including parental expectations, academic pressures, personal aspirations, social interactions, and emotional well-being.

In addition to the core questions, follow-up questions were used to explore specific aspects of their experiences in more detail. These follow-up questions allowed the researchers to probe deeper into the students' responses, gaining a more nuanced understanding of their thoughts and feelings.

G. Ethical Consideration Voluntary Participation

All participants were able to withdraw from or leave the study at any point without feeling obligated to continue. The researchers did not hold this decision against them in any way.

Anonymity

The researchers did not ask the respondents for any personally identifiable information. The advocates ensured anonymity by not requesting or recording any PII.

Confidentiality

The researchers kept the identities of the individuals confidential. All sensitive information was de-identified to prevent the identification of specific individuals. Participants were provided with reading materials to review, and researchers addressed any questions they had afterward.

The risk of Injury

All potential forms of harm—physical: pain or injury that could result from the study procedures; social: participation that could involve social risk, public embarrassment, or stigma; and psychological: sensitive questions or tasks that may trigger negative emotions such as shame or anxiety—were restricted.

Dissemination of Findings

Researchers checked for originality, avoidance of research misconduct, and truthful reporting of findings. Research ethics mattered for scientific integrity, human rights and dignity, and collaboration between science and society.

Data Privacy Act of 2012

In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, this study ensured the protection of all personal and sensitive information gathered from participants. The researchers implemented stringent data protection measures, including encryption and secure storage of data, to prevent unauthorized access. The study only collected data necessary for the research and ensured that all data handling practices were transparent and secure, maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the participants at all times.

2. Results and Discussion

The themes that emerged from the responses of the participants about their lived experiences as a Batang Saytek Students with Tiger Parents at Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School are presented in this section.

Chart A. List of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Parental Control over Hobbies	Limited Extracurricular Choices
	Restricted Hobbies for Academic Focus
Pressure and Internalized Expectations	Striving for Parental Approval
	Emotional Toll of High Expectations
Sense of Fulfillment vs. Disappointment	Recognition Tied to Achievements
	Negative Reinforcement as Motivation
Parental Restrictions Affecting Social Interactions	Limited Socialization Opportunities
	Controlled Friendships
Parental Acknowledgment of Success	Qualified Praise
	Comparison with Siblings or Peers
Constraints and Structure from Parental Rules	Screen Time Restrictions
	Structured Routines
Coping Mechanisms	Support from Friends
	Negative Coping Strategies
Long-Lasting Effects of Parental Discipline and Behavior	Physical or Emotional Discipline
	Emotional Impact from Parental Comparisons

Interview Question 1. *What leisure activities or hobbies do you enjoy outside of school, and how do your parents support or restrict your participation in these activities?*

Chart B. Parental Control over Hobbies

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Parental Control over Hobbies	Limited Extracurricular Choices
	Restricted Hobbies for Academic Focus

The theme of Parental Control over Hobbies highlights how parental expectations often limit adolescents' engagement in activities aligned with their interests. Two sub-themes emerged: Limited Extracurricular Choices and Restricted Hobbies for Academic Focus.

P2 shared being pushed toward basketball despite a passion for drawing and social clubs, while P6 was discouraged from extracurriculars to maintain high grades for scholarship purposes.

These responses show how prioritizing academic success over personal interests can lead to frustration and a lack of fulfillment, underscoring the need for balance between academic goals and personal growth.

Interview Question 2. *What do you feel about the personal expectations your parents have for you?*

Chart C. Pressure and Internalized Expectations

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Pressure and Internalized Expectations	Striving for Parental Approval
	Emotional Toll of High Expectations

The theme of Pressure and Internalized Expectations captures how family pressures and high standards affect students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Two sub-themes emerged: Striving for Parental Approval and Emotional Toll of High Expectations.

P1 shared feeling constant pressure to achieve "high honors" to avoid disappointing their parents, leading to anxiety and a drive for perfection. P3 expressed emotional distress from the threat of being transferred to another school if academic standards weren't met, amplifying fear and self-doubt. Both participants illustrate how internalized expectations result in emotional exhaustion and a sense that their worth is tied to academic success. These findings emphasize the need for parents to balance high expectations with support for their child's emotional well-being and personal growth.

Interview Question 3. *How do your parents' attitudes and actions about your school performance make you feel?*

Chart D. Sense of Fulfillment vs. Disappointment

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Sense of Fulfillment vs. Disappointment	Recognition Tied to Achievements
	Negative Reinforcement as Motivation

The theme Sense of Fulfillment vs. Disappointment highlights how recognition, achievement, and punishment shape students' emotions and self-worth. One participant expressed doubt when receiving positive feedback: "Pag positive, nagdududa po ako bat naging positive." Yet, negative feedback leaves them feeling sad and inadequate despite their efforts: "Pag negative naman po, nakakasag kasi ginawa mo naman best mo pero kulang parin." Another participant described being denied food as punishment for not meeting expectations: "Last year...nasa taas lang po ako noon...hindi po nila ako pinapakain, nagsilbing punishment na po yun."

These responses show how students' confidence and motivation become tied to how others recognize their efforts. While positive feedback brings doubt, harsh punishment and negative reinforcement create fear and emotional distress, impacting their well-being and sense of self-worth.

Interview Question 4. *How do you think your relationship with your parents has influenced your friendships and interactions with peers at school?*

Chart E. Parental Restrictions Affecting Social Interactions

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEME
Parental Restrictions Affecting Social Interactions	Limited Socialization Opportunities
	Controlled Friendships

Parental Restriction Affecting Social Interaction highlights how limitations imposed by parents on their children's social lives influence their development and relationships. One participant shared, "Hindi po pumapayag yung mama ko po na gagala po kasi yun nga po maaapektuhan daw po yung...grades ko po." This reflects how academic performance is often prioritized over social experiences, resulting in limited opportunities for interaction. While these restrictions aim to protect academic success, they can unintentionally hinder the development of essential social skills and relationships. Other participants shared contrasting views on socialization. One noted, "Dahil sa friends ay natututo daw po ako ng mga things na hindi ko po ginagawa dati," illustrating concerns from parents about negative peer influence. This leads to *Controlled Friendships*, where parents closely monitor or limit social interactions to prevent behaviors they perceive as harmful.

Despite their good intentions, these parental controls may limit kids' capacity to negotiate relationships and gain

knowledge from a variety of social situations. Since socialization is essential to emotional development, resilience, and peer learning, a balance must be struck between preserving academic priorities and enabling healthy social interactions.

Interview Question 5. *When you achieve something academically, do you share it with your parents? And what is their reaction?*

Chart F. Parental Acknowledgment of Success

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Parental Acknowledgment of Success	Qualified Praise
	Comparison with Siblings or Peers

Parental Acknowledgment of Success explores how students interpret their parents' reactions to their achievements. One participant shared, "Masaya lang po sila pero nag-compare pa rin po kasi with honors lang po ako," reflecting the theme of Qualified Praise—where success is acknowledged but overshadowed by comparisons, leading to feelings of inadequacy despite accomplishment.

Another participant, P5, expressed, "Since younger siya, need nya more uplifting...pero the next puro brother na po pinakang tutok po sila," illustrating Comparison with Siblings or Peers, where parental focus shifts to another child, leaving the participant feeling overlooked.

These experiences show how conditional recognition and constant comparison can damage self-esteem, even when intended as motivation. It underscores the importance of offering fair, unconditional praise that values individual growth without diminishing it through comparisons.

Interview Question 6. *How have your parent's strict rules influenced your academic performance?*

Chart G. Constraints and Structure from Parental Rules

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Constraints and Structure from Parental Rules	Screen Time Restrictions
	Structured Routines

Constraints and Structure from Parental Rules captures the strict expectations "Tiger Parents" impose on Batang Saytek students, shaping their daily lives with discipline and focus but often causing emotional stress and feelings of restriction. The sub-theme Screen Time Restrictions reflects the clash between digital learning needs and parents' fears of excessive screen use. P5 shared their struggle with limited screen access despite its necessity for academic tasks, highlighting the disconnect between parental rules and students' educational demands.

The sub-theme Structured Routines emphasizes rigid schedules meant to foster consistent academic effort but often leaving little room for relaxation or personal choice. P6 described feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed by their parents' strict study routines: "Minsan parang lagi po akong nasasakal sa rules... parang kailangan ko po mag-

aral."

These experiences reveal how strict parental control, though well-intentioned, can create emotional pressure and a sense of being trapped, emphasizing the need for a balance between discipline and emotional well-being.

Interview Question 7. *What are some specific strategies you use to stay motivated and manage the pressures from both your academic workload and your parents' expectations?*

Chart H. Coping Mechanisms

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Coping Mechanisms	Support from Friends
	Negative Coping Strategies

The theme Coping mechanisms explores how Batang Saytek students manage the immense pressure from their academic workload and their Tiger Parents' expectations. These coping strategies range from positive, supportive behaviors to more harmful responses.

The sub-theme Support from Friends highlights how social networks help students navigate stress and academic challenges. P1 shared how venting frustrations and participating in study groups eased their academic burden: "Venting out" to friends and working together helped me feel less alone. This shows the value of peer support in providing both emotional relief and practical help.

On the other hand, the sub-theme Negative Coping Strategies reveals the harmful ways some students manage pressure, including self-harm. P5 admitted to resorting to self-harm before finding emotional support from their boyfriend, showing how the presence of a strong support system can make a crucial difference in coping.

These responses illustrate how access to emotional support significantly shapes students' ability to manage stress, emphasizing the importance of positive coping mechanisms and strong social connections.

Interview Question 8. *What specific actions or behaviors from your parents have had the most significant impact on you, and in what ways?*

Chart I. Long-Lasting Effects of Parental Discipline and Behavior

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Long-Lasting Effects of Parental Discipline and Behavior	Physical or Emotional Discipline
	Emotional Impact from Parental Comparisons

Long-Lasting Effects of Parental Discipline and Behavior reveals the deep emotional and psychological impact that strict parenting leaves on students. Participants described how harsh discipline and emotional manipulation created lasting scars.

The sub-theme Physical and Emotional Punishment

highlights disciplinary methods involving physical or emotional harm. Though often intended to enforce obedience, these measures can lead to long-term trauma and emotional insecurity. P5 shared a disturbing instance of food deprivation as punishment, which caused not only physical harm but also deep emotional distress. This use of control fosters resentment and long-lasting emotional scars.

Emotional Impact from Parental Comparisons explores how public comparisons, meant to motivate, often lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. P4 described how their parents publicly posted comparisons on social media, exacerbating their sense of unworthiness. This kind of emotional manipulation leaves students feeling they are never “enough,” with long-term consequences on their self-image and mental health.

These stories illustrate how extreme forms of discipline—whether through physical deprivation or emotional tactics—leave lasting damage. The impact extends beyond immediate punishment, shaping students’ long-term emotional development and relationships. Research supports these findings, with studies like Guarnotta *et al.* (2023) [3] and the American Psychological Association (2024) showing how tiger parenting’s focus on discipline and excellence often comes at a steep emotional cost, leading to anxiety, depression, and self-harm.

Ultimately, the effects of tiger parenting are nuanced, and it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting academic excellence and nurturing emotional health. While academic achievements are important, ensuring that children develop emotionally and socially is equally vital. A more balanced and supportive parenting approach may offer children a healthier, more fulfilling path to success, helping them thrive in both academic and personal aspects of life. By prioritizing both academic growth and emotional development, parents can help children navigate the challenges of adolescence while fostering resilience without compromising their mental health (American Psychological Association, 2024).

3. Discussion

The study on the lived experiences of Batang Saytek students with Tiger Parents at Santa Rosa Science and Technology High School revealed the significant impact of strict parenting on students’ academic, emotional, and social well-being. Participants described experiencing immense academic pressure, limited autonomy, and emotional challenges due to high parental expectations. Coping mechanisms varied among students—some relied on peer support and study groups to manage stress, while others resorted to negative coping strategies such as self-harm when emotional support was lacking. The long-lasting effects of parental discipline were also evident, with students recalling experiences of physical and emotional punishment, including food deprivation and public comparisons, leading to deep-seated insecurities and emotional distress.

These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions that foster healthier communication and coping strategies between parents and students. To address these challenges, the proposed program, “Unspoken Thoughts: You Are Heard,” aims to create a safe space for students and parents to express their struggles and gain a deeper understanding of each other’s perspectives.

This initiative is designed to bridge the communication gap between students and their parents by providing a platform for open and constructive dialogue. The title reflects the

unexpressed emotions students often feel but struggle to communicate, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and validating their experiences.

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