THE FILIPINO YOUTH TODAY: GOING BEYOND THE LINES

by:

Marie Buena S. Bunsoy

“The youth is the hope of our future.” – Dr. Jose P. Rizal

Just as our country seeks the help of the youth in solving the problems that it faces, it seems that the youth themselves become the major dilemma of our country at this very hour. The generation of the youth today is far different from the past. Instead of engaging themselves to their family and studies, they usually spend more time with their colleagues that sometimes brought them to danger. Observing them, everyone can say that the Filipino youth become rebel and liberated nowadays. The way they dress and act is different. They do what they want to do even if it can bring them into trouble. They fail to see what their priorities are and it brings them to a senseless direction.

In the year 1996, the survey conducted by Social Weather Station said that Filipino youth are proud to be a citizen of our country, easily declaring willingness to defend the country in case of war. They put great importance on marriage and family, friends, education, work, religion, society, and money, but not much importance on recreation, hobbies, or politics. They are very sensitive to how parents and children make personal sacrifices for one other. Not only are they personally religious, but they actively participate in religious organizations very regularly. But as time passes by, there’s an unexpectedly high incidences of youth involvement in criminality, illegal drug use, and illicit sex. This fact presented by SWS has been existing until the present
time. To prove this, it is often seen and watched in news programs that individuals range from the ages 14-24 are ones who betrothed themselves to drugs, alcohol, and smoking. In a study conducted in 1994, there are 2.75 M young smokers and 4.7 drinkers; While some have also case like teenage pregnancy, and when lack in readiness leads to abortion. This leaves a question in every mind “Why is this happening to Filipino youth? Why is the Youth seemingly misdirected?”

Still, there are some youth who are not victims of such acts, but only by working at a very young age because of financial problem. This is proven by the July 1995 survey of the National Statistics Office (NSO) reports that there were 3.7 M working children. 70% is engaged in fishing, agriculture and forestry; 24% work in services and sales; and 5% work in industries.

Meanwhile, the most noticeable difference of youth today compared to the past is their engagement in technology. Because of this, they prefer virtual interaction like text messaging, email, Internet chat, and surfing rather than personal interaction. But according to Villar, “‘The outcome is not generational; it is more like a popular trend as Filipinos of all ages have easy access through cellular phones and internet cafes.”

Every youth must be responsible of their acts whatever situation he has. Guided by the cliché of Dr. J.P. Rizal, each and everyone must be involved and empowered, and avoid apathy in the hardships face by the country. Filipino youth must make an action to prove that we, youth, are the hope of our nation.

The youth today are so exposed in social media and it is verified by a study of the University of Maryland in 2010 that suggested that social media services may be addictive, and
that using social media services may lead to a “fear of missing out,” also known as the phrase “FOMO” by many students. According to Tata Consultancy Services survey, most prefer communicating through Facebook and Twitter. Seventy four percent of those surveyed said they use Facebook the most to communicate while 54 per cent conceded to use SMS, both significantly higher than the number of students who said they use voice calls (44 per cent) for the same purpose. Challenges to youth in this new age of quick and easy social media come in both the consumption of media and in the creation of media. One of the greatest challenges that youth face in negotiating new media revolves around sex. With the average adolescent watching television for 12 hours per week and using the Internet for 12.5 hours per week, exposure to media that depicts unhealthy sexual practices and attitudes is highly likely. Not only is pornography more accessible than ever, but also even mainstream media tends to depict sexual behaviors without any mention of risk or responsibility. This creates a very real challenge for youth who may be relying on media to provide them with guidance and information about sexuality and sexual practices. These challenges of media use and accessibility are very real, and youth need guidance from trusted adults to learn how to negotiate them in order to make the most out of the opportunities that increased access creates. But, along with these challenges come opportunities for youth to increase their knowledge and skills and to share their own ideas more broadly.

Social media differentiates from traditional/industrial media in many aspects such as quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site. The benefits of participating in social media have
gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income, as discussed in Tang, Gu, and Whinston (2012).

Various reports suggest that about eighty-three percent of youth use their phones for email, mobile internet and texting. The report further states that these teens send and receive text messages 144 times a day. If the teens are not texting, they are usually on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter where they chat, share photos and video and participate in gaming.

The negative effects of being this “plugged in” are beginning to take enormous effect on kids. Because social interaction comes overwhelmingly online rather than face to face, American youth are showing severe lack of social skills. They are often more comfortable with technology than they are with talking to people. They have not learned the proper communication and conversation skills, how to deal with interpersonal situations and how to date and get to know other people behind the screen. Researchers have found that the middle-school, high school and college students who used Facebook at least once during a 15 minute period get lower grades overall. Observing the Filipino youth today, their self-esteem in expressing themselves in public is low and most put across their ideas and true selves through social media. The more we see a person online, the lower their performances in class. This is because they are so overwhelmed by the benefits brought to them by social media and comes to the juncture that they become addicted in dealing themselves with it.

The three major reasons why teens are so committed in social media are: (1) parents are unaware of the issues involved in the online connections; (2) parents don’t want to interfere in their children’s social lives; and (3) parents are afraid to take a stand. Statistics has shown that 88% of parents know that their teens typically use the internet to communicate with
people they don’t know in the offline world are not aware of its consequences, while only 34% of parents check their child’s social network sites to know what’s going on with their child and also to provide them protection.

In some studies, it is found out that 67% of teenagers say they know how to hide what they do online from parents; 43% of teens say they would change their online behavior if they knew that their parents were watching them; 39% think their online activity is private from everyone, including parents; and 38% would feel offended if they found out their parents were spying on them.

In spite of the negative effects brought by social media, still many people say that using social media is really helpful to our lives. According to Amy Mitchell, “Facebook news users get more news from friends and family and see it as news they might well have gotten someplace else if Facebook did not exist. For Twitter users, though, the news links come from a more even mix of family and friends and news organizations. Most of these users also feel that without Twitter, they would have missed this kind of news”. Thus, social media results in teens being more well-informed about national and global news than they would be otherwise.

Social media has become part of the modern teenage lifestyle. It makes our life so much easier and much more efficient. It has become an essential part of our communication culture that cannot be taken away easily, because we are so dependent on it. Without social media we wouldn’t be able to connect with the people the way we do now.

Although the exponential growth of the Internet in conjunction with the tremendous success of social media is no longer debated, researchers remain polarized by the ongoing
discussions pertaining to the potential of the Internet in actualizing social change. Skeptics who do not ascribe to the possibility of the Internet in actualizing social change draw their conclusions from a number of studies (Baumgartner & Morris, 2009; Grossman 2004). Others instead point out that the effect of the Internet on civic participation and political engagement is highly dependent on the individuals themselves, although the opportunities for engagement are present (Banaji & Buckingham, 2010; Zhang, Johnson, Seltzer, & Bichard, 2010). There are clearly many examples of those who doubt that the Internet can facilitate meaningful activism, let alone social change. In another vein, there are a growing number of studies that oppose the above claims. Their results suggest that the potential of current technologies and specifically, social media, are being effectively utilized by young activists who are formalizing new modes of activism (Bachen, Raphael, Lynn, McKee, & Phillippi, 2008; Delli Carpini 2000; Harris & Wyn, 2009; Juris & Pleysers 2009). These critics, besides being more hopeful, firmly believe in the Internet and social media’s potential to bring about social change, and subscribe to non-traditional forms of youth activism. In fact, what has emerged for Wilson (2006) is that this “new” virtual world should not be differentiated from the “real” world. According to Wilson, for young people (and countless adults nowadays), the virtual is as real as offline relationships and experiences (p. 316). Thus, it stands to reason that since offline and online “realities” have become intrinsically intertwined, a disconnect no longer exists between the two. And as Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2009) postulate, “The development of SNSs dedicated to fostering civil and political engagement among users, particularly young people, speaks in a loud voice to the potentialities of social media as a tool for collective action” (p. 879). Hence, in order to precipitate meaningful changes in today’s world, young people’s use of social media must play a large part in actualizing those changes. Furthermore, in the book “Networked – The new social
operating system” by Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, they said that social media is used to document memories, learn about and explore things, advertise oneself and form friendships.

In the research conducted by Browser Media, Socialnomics, MacWorld in November 12, 2012, statistics revealed that the total percentage of 18-24 years olds who are already using social media is 98%. The Philippines got the sixth rank in the top ten most engaged countries in social media.

The youth is living with technologies and seems that it becomes part of their learning. Instead of using books as a primary reference in studying, they use technologies and other gadgets to search information and facts. Until at present, it has been argued if technology is a boon or bane in the lives of people. Interviewing students, most of them say that they cannot survive and succeed without the presence of technologies.

In the article “Digital Technologies Boost Student Success Rates” by John Baker and John Smallwood published in June 26, 2013, young students much prefer approaches that are driven by new technologies. They’ve grown up in a digital world. They’ve used social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, online video games and texting to share thoughts and coordinate activities. They want interaction and immersion in their learning experiences because this is how they interact and learn when they are not involved in conventional classroom settings.

Many educators would agree that a vital indicator of student success is students’ ability to develop both skills and an interest for lifelong learning. If this is the objective, however, then it follows that the modes of teaching that must be employed and the overall educational experience and environment should reinforce these skills. As believed by Ludmila Smirnova of Mount Saint
Mary College, the use of technology has emerged as a keystone issue with regard to lifelong learning. Labeled by some as “digital natives” (J. Brown, S. Parpert, M. Prensky), the computer and its electronic offshoots are so integral to their modes of thought, information acquisition and communication – indeed, central to their core behavioral repertoire — that they literally live in a virtual vernacular world.

Traditionally, education focused on the three “Rs” of “reading, `riting and `rithmetic.” But these core skill sets must now be matched by an additional 3 Rs of information literacy: rigor, relevance and relationships. Rigor refers to the developed skill of discerning the accuracy and validity of information accessed on the Internet, along with meeting the demands of copyright, protection of intellectual property and creative commons requirements. Relevance involves the ability to identify online information that relates directly to the topic of study or research using a full array of online information sources and tools, while avoiding the potential for disruptive tangents that the Web offers. Relationship refers to the ability to network and identify communities of like-minded people and to collaborate and contribute to an informational commons. This new set of skills and its vast potential for collaboration offers new hope for an informed global society with a civic view of the goals of education. While therefore serving the prospects for democracy, this new reality complicates outmoded notions of individual achievement.

Integrating technology into the classroom to support instruction is not a new concept. For years, students with special needs have been equipped with technology to assist them in functional skills. However, using technology to support the individual needs of students in the general education population is an evolving pedagogy. Today’s educators have either been
immersed in technology in college and are embracing it with eagerness, or are witnessing a complete paradigm shift in how they view teaching and instruction with technology. Few students are entering school without a solid ground of experience using technology in the home environment. It is becoming imperative that educators are prepared to use available technologies to engage students in the learning experience.

In the light of Joshua M. Larson of University of Utah, technology only complements academic advising to impact student success when it is used as a tool to achieve a Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). It is important that technology is used within an assessment rubric because though technology is ubiquitous in today’s institutions, I could find little evidence that technology impacts student success. Because technologies are nearly an infinite resource in today’s world, finding cool technologies is easy but relatively unimportant to student success. It is more important that divisors understand how, why, and when to implement technology in advising. Implementation of technology can be effortless when advisers understand that technology complements academic advising when used as a tool to achieve Student Learning Outcomes. When we view technology as a tool, great innovation is not in the technology itself but in how it alters or impacts how we advise. Thus, the greatest impact technology has on academic advising is that it leads us to find new ways to achieve our outcomes and help students succeed.

Technologies and the people involved in the lives of the youth are not enough to say that learning really takes place. Definitely, teachers have one of the biggest roles in helping the students to achieve who and what they want to be. Guiding the students in discovering their “hidden treasures” is also the responsibility of the teachers. Their expectations are perceived to
play a strong role in academic achievement. In the study of Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson in 1968, it was proven that, the teacher produces a level of academic achievement because of the teacher’s expectations of the student’s ability. The study reported increased student achievement for those students where the teachers had higher expectations, self-fulfilling prophecy. Their research was investigated by Snow 1969; Thorndike 1968; Wineburg 1987 and found technical defects serious enough to cast doubt upon the accuracy of its findings. Trouilloud, et al (2002) and others demonstrated that teachers have accurate expectations of student learning abilities and therefore do not have false expectations. In addition, student self-perceived abilities have a mediating effect on the self-fulfilling prophecy (Trouilloud, et al 2002).

Some researchers say that student learning can be positively impacted by the encouragement of teachers to their students. A teacher’s ideas and expectations of his or her students’ capabilities have an effect on student academic performance and achievements. If teachers believe in their students, their students begin to believe in themselves. Students take into effect the beliefs their teachers have on them and accept it as part of who they are and their abilities. When students are viewed in a negative way by their teachers such as, being lazy, unmotivated and having no abilities, they take on those beliefs about themselves. Many teachers may not be aware of their actions towards particular students in the classroom but their students become aware of them.

Therefore, teacher expectations of academic achievement have little impact on student achievement. However, teachers do have a significant impact on student achievement outcomes. They have this impact through teacher behavior. Education is an important tool that can shape an
individual and allow creativity, opportunity and growth. As a teacher, it is necessary to motivate students and help them recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Educators are important role models for students and have a big impact on helping shape, create, support and establish students’ strengths, goals and knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the effective qualities, skills and characteristics that one brings into a learning environment. Moreover, good quality teacher preparation is important to student academic achievement. Prepared graduates have a higher likelihood of remaining teachers and providing quality service to their students and to the schools they work in.

Teacher-efficacy is a teacher’s confidence in their ability to help students to learn. Research shows that teacher-efficacy has an effect on his or her students’ academic performance. It is important that teachers believe in themselves and in their abilities as a role model and educator, because it plays an important role on their student’s self-perception and performance. It also helps a teacher communicate more effectively with students as well as with the overall perception of their student’s strengths and weaknesses. Teachers with self-efficacy have a positive impact on their students’ academic performance. It is something that all teachers need to build, because it is believed to have an important role on students’ academic performance.

In the article “Teachers who Influence High Academic Performance in Students” by Karen Sonja Carey Ashley in January 14, 2012, students assigned to high value-added teachers are likely to become successful adults over the long-term. They are more likely to progress through the top colleges and settle into higher income jobs. In contrast, the impact of a low value-added teacher on students is one of uncertainty in career path and personal growth. Based on the study, such students are more likely to become teenage parents, without a tertiary
education or potential for higher earnings (Raj Chetty). They play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). In their study, Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) concluded that the most important factor influencing student learning is the teacher. Teachers stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, values and skills in the learning process. If the teacher is ineffective, students under the teacher’s tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically. This is regardless of how similar or different the students are in terms of individual potential in academic achievement. According to Rivkin, Hanusheck and Kain (2005), there has never been consensus on the specific teacher factors that influence students’ academic achievement. Researchers have examined the influence of teacher characteristics such as gender, educational qualifications and teaching experience on students’ academic achievement with varied findings. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008) found that there was a significant relationship between teachers’ gender and students’ academic achievement. This is contrary to Dee cited in Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008). Yala and Wanjoji (2011) and Adeyemi (2010) found that teachers’ experience and educational qualifications were the prime predictors of students’ academic achievement. However, Ravkin et al (2005) found that teachers’ teaching experience and educational qualifications were not significantly related to students’ achievement. Etsy (2005) study in Ghana found that the teacher factors that significantly contributed to low academic achievement were incidences of lateness to school, incidences of absenteeism, and inability to complete the syllabi. Oredein and Oloyede (2007) concluded that teacher management of homework and assignments given to students have an impact on student achievement especially when it is well explained, motivational, corrected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. According to
Ankomah, Koomson, Busn and Oduro (2005), teacher factors that have an effect on academic achievement include the number of teachers on post, teacher pupil ratio, teacher qualifications and the personal characteristics of the individual teacher. The personal characteristics include academic qualifications, pedagogical training, content training, aptitude, and years of service/experience. A teacher brings these characteristics to class to facilitate the learning process. The extent to which other inputs can improve the quality of education is directly related to the extent to which teachers effectively use the inputs to improve the teaching and learning process. According to Sifuna and Sawamura (2011), the process quality is therefore the quality of the teacher-pupil interaction in the teaching learning process.

In this modern world, the Filipino Family is far different a chunk of centuries ago. We are now living in the modern era where in everything is fast paced and is machine ready. But one thing is for sure, the Filipino Family still embarks love for each other and support for one another. A few of the characteristics of a Filipino Family are as follow: The Filipino Family humbly attends Sunday masses, attends to one another’s needs, supports each other in every way, joins together during special occasions especially holidays and is forever supportive of their relatives.

Commensurate by some youth, families nowadays are not close bonded. Teenagers usually want to be with their friends and tell them about anything and everything under the sun. Some parents have only a little knowledge about the situation of their child. According to some researches on Guidance and Counseling, those teenagers want to spend more time with their friends because they feel that they are being left behind by their parents who are busy working every day.
In Queena Lee-Chua’s article “Filipino families face today’s world” published on the Philippine Daily Inquirer, it is written that parents’ action can reshape the behavior of their children and need to give them unconditional positive regard, enough time and attention, and to teach them to affirm and care genuinely for one another. Communication with their children is the answer. Getting in touch with and through to teens can be tricky, especially for midlife parents, and we look at ways to connect with them.

Based on observation, some youth possess disruptive behaviors and so hard to deal with. It is not simple for them to confide their personal issues because of developed mistrust within themselves and towards other people. Some are violent, and some are easily depressed without articulating the reason. When they are asked about the problems existing within them, they usually say it is because of family. Most are products of the unready family. Those interviewed students belonging to this kind of family live only with their other relatives and until now they have been “craving” for the love and guidance of their parents who broke up. This issue, when not given solution, will eventually lead the youth to the wrong paths of life. It is, indeed, that family has the largest contribution in the development and success of the youth. What actions or deeds do they see from their parents, whether it is a good or passive one, creates an impact on an individual.

Filipino families face many tough issues, and we look candidly at some of their biggest challenges. We listen to the traumatized children of the poor, and look at how their feelings are expressed in their drawings. We tackle sexual abuse, and look at ways to prevent it. We talk about autism, the OFW (overseas Filipino worker) phenomenon, and unhappy teens, and give recommendations on how to deal with them.
Analyzing the whole study, it is clear that the youth today is the product of all the factors involved in his life. Social media plays an important role in teenagers’ life and helps strengthen relationships among teens. Social networks have provided people with the opportunity to connect with others and build better relationships with friends with whom we are unable to meet personally, and letting them know about our life and take input about their lives and events happening with them (Ali). Yet, according to studies, social media lessen the closeness of the youth to their family. Moreover, it also affects the performance of students on their classes for they spend more time dealing with social media rather than focusing first on their studies and becomes it as their least priority. In the light of some researches, youth become so irresponsible in sharing their emotions, pictures, and information in social networking sites. The guidance of the parents is strictly recommended.

It is also evident that technology plays a large part on the academic success of the students. Because we are now living in a “digital world”, students preferred to use technology in the learning process for the researchers believe that it is now the key to make the students more motivated in learning. Furthermore, according to the American studies, students will surely become competent when using techies in learning for our world nowadays is invaded by different kinds of technologies.

In addition, the teachers who have the responsibility to enrich the minds, values, and skills of the students must be aware how they are going to motivate and nurture the intelligence and talents the students have. Teacher-efficacy, encouragement, motivation, and expectations impinge on the students’ learning process.
Lastly, the Filipino family must always be involved in the lives of the youth. Parents should give more attention to their kids, teach them good values, and guide them in every situation they face. There is only lack of understanding in the family when there is less or no communication. In spite of the challenges faced by Filipino families today, it has still a possibility to overcome such when they only help one another and not be defeated by the modern system our world has today.

To solve the youth’s issue regarding the social media, it is better if they put limitations on what they post or do in social networking sites. If there were personal problems exist within them, then they must seek the help of their parents and not to tell the whole world about the current situation they have to avoid judgment. Social media is created mainly to be updated with friends, to meet new people, and to communicate with distant relatives; but seems that the benefits brought by social media have been abused. The youth must be responsible in using the social media and do not involved themselves to cybercrime or cyber bullying. What we posts on social networking sites reflected who we are. What we are is a reflection of how our country has raised us. At the end of the day, not only the youth but the Philippines itself could be judged around the globe.

On the other hand, in using technology, the youth must have limitations also. They must not only rely in technology as a primary source of learning. Using the traditional references like books and encyclopedia can also be helpful. Teens should not think that they can’t survive without technology. It must not be overused. As teachers, it is good to know what tools can be used to make the students motivated in reaching their goals. Teachers must steer students in
using technology and always remind them about the disadvantages of it. Use it mostly in learning, not in unnecessary things.

Teachers are the second parents in schools. Therefore, they should be aware what are the strengths and weaknesses of the students to adjust their teaching styles and pedagogies. If we want our students to succeed in attaining the objectives and know the purpose of learning a certain lesson, we must set our expectations and standards first so they’ll strive to reach it. It is said that teachers’ attitude and behavior matter. Consequently, they should show enthusiasm and dedication to students for them to know that there’s always someone who believes in them. To prove this, do not only embark students by words of mouth, but they must be involved in some activities where their intellectual skills and capacities are suited. What students see in the behavior of teachers affects their view in learning.

Among the factors, parents must have the largest part in shaping the youth. They first learn from their parents. No matters how old are they but they always need the guidance of their parents. With regards to the issues arising with the use of social media, parents must get off the sidelines and get involved and must have the responsibility to protect their children and be aware of what is going on in the online world. Investigate and help your child adjust privacy settings. Be aware of who can see what they post, and what is being posted about them. Take with them about online safety. Aside from teachers, technologies, and the people surrounding the youth which learning occurs, parents should be the ones to teach them first. They must always monitor their children and always be there when they have problems for them not to feel unimportant and excluded. Always be there when they need advice. Have a bonding with your children.
Remember that parents are one of the persons who boost the trust of the youth within themselves.

To sum up all, the Filipino youth must be given proper guidance and be a priority above all. All the factors mentioned really impinge on the youth; but absolutely, it depends upon them how would they respond to such and how they will deal with the issues they face. Every youth should seize discipline and concern for the each individual and hold hands in helping each other to change the passive behaviors exist in them.

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