



Batang-bata Ka Pa: Effectiveness of Project Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap in Decreasing the Incidence of Teenage Pregnancy in the City of Malolos

Alexis C. Cruz

Research Scholar, City Government of Malolos

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0524.1287>

Introduction

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant global public health issue, with around 12 million adolescents giving birth each year, primarily in low and middle-income countries (WHO, 2021). This phenomenon carries serious health risks, such as maternal and infant mortality, and can lead to educational disruptions, economic limitations, and cycles of poverty (UNFPA, 2020).

In the Philippines, teenage pregnancy is particularly prevalent. In 2019, 62,510 births were recorded among teenage mothers aged 10 to 19, making up 1.4% of all births (PSA, 2021). Contributing factors include inadequate access to sex education, limited reproductive health services, cultural taboos, and socioeconomic disparities (UNFPA, 2019).

Comprehensive sex education (CSE) is crucial for addressing teenage pregnancy. CSE programs provide adolescents with knowledge about anatomy, contraception, STI prevention, consent, and healthy relationships, helping them make informed decisions (UNESCO, 2018). Research shows that CSE can reduce teenage pregnancy rates and improve sexual health outcomes by increasing knowledge and positive attitudes towards contraception (Kirby, 2007; Sedgh et al., 2016).

Despite efforts, teenage pregnancy remains high in the Philippines, particularly in the ASEAN region, where the rate stands at 55 births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, compared to a global decline (World Bank, 2021). In 2019, the country saw 496 births daily to teenage mothers, with an increasing number of these mothers being very young (PSA, 2021). The Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM) projects that over 133,000 families could be led by underage individuals by year's end (Ordinario, 2021).

Efforts like DepEd's integration of CSE and the City Government of Malolos' "Abot Kamay na Pangarap Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap" (AKaP) program show potential in addressing this issue. These initiatives aim to empower adolescents with comprehensive sexual education, thereby reducing teenage pregnancy rates and promoting overall well-being.

This study examines the relationship between sex education and teenage pregnancy, particularly the impact of the AKaP program in Malolos. It seeks to provide a policy framework for implementing effective interventions to prevent teenage pregnancy, highlighting the importance of comprehensive sexuality education and local government involvement in addressing this public health concern.

Research Questions

Teenage pregnancy is a significant social issue in many communities, including the City of Malolos. To address this, Project Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap was implemented. This research investigates the effectiveness of this project in reducing teenage pregnancy in Malolos. The research questions are:

1. What was the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Malolos before Project Abot Kamay?
2. What are the key components of Project Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' knowledge about sex education and teenage pregnancy before and after Project Abot Kamay?
4. What are the gaps, challenges, and areas for improvement in Project Abot Kamay implemented by LGU?
5. What are the key components and recommendations for a comprehensive policy framework for teenage pregnancy prevention in Malolos?

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in Junior High students' knowledge about sex education and teen pregnancy prevention after participating in LGU programs or projects.

Conceptual Framework

This framework shows the program Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap as the independent variable influencing the dependent variable, Teenage Pregnancy.

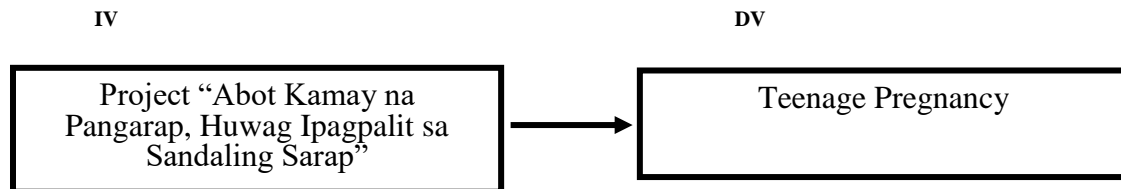


Figure 3. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual framework guiding the investigation. The first frame presents the Independent Variable (IV), which is the LGU's program Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap. Arrows connecting the IV and the Dependent Variable (teenage pregnancy) depict their interrelationship. The study evaluated the efficacy of this local government intervention in reducing adolescent pregnancy rates.

Significance of the Study

This study underscores the importance of sex education in reducing unintended adolescent pregnancies through local government initiatives. The study benefits various groups:

- Teachers: It offers strategies to help children and teens develop into sexually mature adults with responsible behavior.
- Healthcare Providers: Enhances understanding of the negative effects of teen pregnancy, leading to fewer hospitalizations and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Parents: Aids parents in discussing sexual topics with their children, promoting open conversations about sexuality.
- Teenagers: Provides knowledge on safe sexual practices, reducing STDs and pregnancies, and discouraging risky behaviors.
- Students: Equips them with knowledge and confidence to make positive sexual and reproductive health choices.
- Community: Promotes the importance of sex education, potentially reducing teen pregnancies, bullying, and STDs.
- Future Researchers: Serves as a resource for further studies on sex education and teen pregnancy.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study evaluates the knowledge of Junior and Senior High School students who participated in the program "Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap" to assess the effectiveness of local government interventions in preventing adolescent pregnancy.

Methodology

Type of Research: The study employs a descriptive comparative research design to measure knowledge about sex education and teenage pregnancy before and after the intervention.

Respondents

600 Junior High School students from various public schools in the city, selected through simple random sampling.

Proposed Program/Project/Activity

The program "Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap" aims to reduce teenage pregnancy and STDs through education and film festivals. It involves various city government departments and includes a film competition and symposium on adolescent health.

Instrument of the Study

Pre- and post-tests with true/false and fill-in-the-blank sections on sexual and reproductive health were used to evaluate knowledge improvement.

Data Collection Procedure

Structured pre- and post-test questionnaires were administered to assess knowledge before and after the program.

Data Analysis

Mean scores of pre-test and post-test assessments were compared to measure knowledge improvement across various schools.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were adhered to, ensuring participant welfare, informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity.

Results and Discussion

The study reveals a rising trend in teenage pregnancies in Malolos from 2018 to 2022, indicating the ongoing challenges faced by adolescents regarding early parenthood. Despite efforts to reduce these numbers, the problem persists, highlighting the need for continued intervention and education.

In 2021, teenage pregnancy cases surged to 398, underscoring the need to address its root causes in Malolos. This trend continued in 2022 with 400 cases, highlighting the persistent issue.

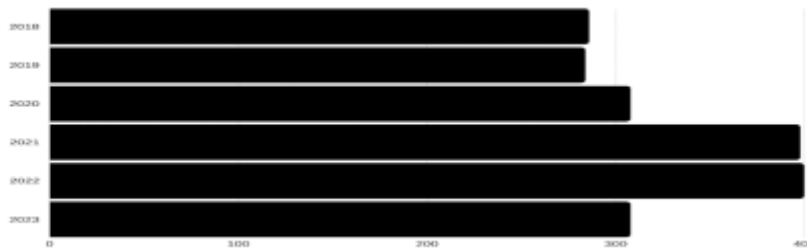


Figure 2: Teenage Pregnancy Rate in the City of Malolos

Film Competition: Part of the "Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap" project, Marcelo H. del Pilar National High School submitted 30 entries, with the top 5 finalists awarded.

City-wide Symposium: A symposium on sex education and teenage pregnancy was held in 13 schools, involving 880 students, 120 teachers and administrators, and 51 barangay volunteers.

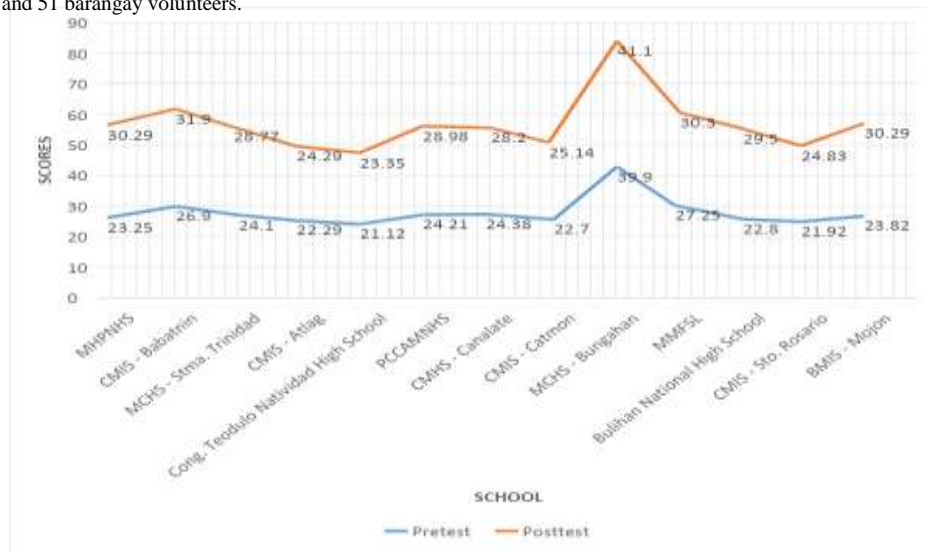


Figure 4: Pre test and post test results from students

With reference to their understanding of sex education and teenage pregnancy, students in the thirteen participating schools scored on average between 21.12 and 39.9 on the pretest. Meanwhile, the average mean of the post assessment scores ranged from 23.35 to 41.1.

Using a significance level (α) of 0.05 and 12 degrees of freedom, the critical t-value for a two-tailed test is approximately 2.179. Since the calculated t-value (7.94) exceeds the critical t-value (2.179), we reject the null hypothesis, indicating a statistically significant difference between the mean pretest and posttest scores.

Posttest results from multiple institutions (CMIS-Babatnín, PCCAMNHS, MMFSL, BMIS-Mojón) show significant knowledge gains compared to pretest scores, demonstrating the seminar's success in improving comprehension. While some schools (Bulihan National High School, MCHS-Bungahan, CMIS-Catmon) showed less progress, the seminar positively influenced all institutions. Improvement was modest at CMIS-Atlag, Cong. Teodulo Natividad High School, and CMIS-Sto. Rosario.

Project AKAP targeted public schools in Malolos City. Researchers noted the need for more funding to provide additional Social Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) materials and to include private school students.

The data underscores significant knowledge growth post-seminar, highlighting the importance of continuous efforts to enhance educational achievements and student learning. Teenage pregnancy remains a global public health concern with severe social, economic, and health implications. Despite efforts in Malolos City, the issue persists. To address this challenge, a comprehensive, evidence-based policy framework is essential to guide the City Government of Malolos in preventing teenage pregnancy.

The framework's primary objective is to reduce teenage pregnancy in Malolos City by addressing its root causes and promoting healthy behaviors among adolescents, thus safeguarding their well-being and future opportunities.

Key Improvement Area:	Objectives	Strategies	Person/s Involved	Timeline	Resources	Success Indicators
Teenage Pregnancy Reduction	1. Increase the knowledge of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Coordinators in public and private schools in the City of Malolos	1. Implement capacity development seminars and trainings.	- DepEd - CSWDO - PopCom - CSE Coordinators - School Administrators	- Annual throughout the fiscal year	- Budget allocation for training materials - Access to training facilities and technology resources	1. Evaluate the extent to which CSE Coordinators integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills into the development and delivery of updated comprehensive sexuality education curricula within their respective schools.
	2. Educate the youth through SBCC materials for information dissemination.	2. Develop SBCC materials.	- CIO - DepEd - CHO - SK - SB	- Within the first semester of the fiscal year	- Budget allocation for conceptualization, development and production of SBCC materials.	2. Increase the number of materials distributed on seminars and trainings.
	3. Increase the knowledge of Barangay Population Workers (BPW) regarding puberty, fertility and teenage pregnancy prevention.	3. Provide trainings and seminars for BPW.	- CSWDO - CPD - BPW	- Quarterly sessions throughout the fiscal year	- Budget allocation for training materials - Access to training facilities and technology resources	3. Increase the retention of information over time by conducting follow-up assessments or surveys several months after the training sessions.

	4. Establish community engagement and support with parents, community stakeholders, teachers and religious leaders.	4. Engage community participation through workshops, and support services to help everyone to be supportive, open minded and approachable to create a safe environment for discussions about sensitive topics.	- CSWDO - CPD - BPW - SK - SB	- Ongoing throughout the fiscal year	- Budget allocation for training materials - Access to training facilities and technology resources	4. Positive feedback from the community regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of support programs.
--	---	--	---	--------------------------------------	--	---

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Teenage Pregnancy Trends: Malolos recorded 286 adolescent pregnancies in 2018, with a slight decrease to 284 in 2019, followed by an increase to 308 in 2020.
2. Project AKAP Impact: The project's film competition and symposium significantly raised awareness about sex education and teenage pregnancy.
3. Student Comprehension: Pre-assessment scores ranged from 21.12 to 39.9, while post-assessment scores ranged from 23.35 to 41.1, showing an increase in knowledge.
4. Knowledge Improvement: There is a significant increase in participants' understanding of sex education and teenage pregnancy.
5. Funding Needs: Additional funding is needed to reach a broader audience in Malolos.
6. Policy Framework: An evidence-based policy framework was created to help the Malolos City Government prevent teenage pregnancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Comprehensive Policy Framework: The City Government of Malolos should establish an evidence-based framework to prevent teenage pregnancy.
2. Framework Elements: Include essential elements and recommendations from public health and social welfare research.
3. Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Implement age-appropriate, culturally sensitive sex education in schools and communities.
4. Tailored Curriculum: Ensure the curriculum is suitable for different age groups and incorporates diverse perspectives.
5. Youth Clinics and Outreach Programs: Prioritize creating youth-focused clinics and outreach initiatives.
6. Collaborative Efforts: Work with community leaders, parents, educators, healthcare providers, and youth organizations to enhance understanding and discussions on teenage pregnancy and related topics.


REFERENCES

- Abrigo, R.M., & Paqueo, V.B. (2016). The irony of RI law critics' opposition to comprehensive sex education, PIDS Discussion Paper Series, No. 2016-53, Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Quezon City. Retrieved from <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/173574/1/pidsdps1653.pdf>
- Almendral, A., (2020) Why the Philippines has so Many Teen Moms. Retrieve from <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/08/21/787921856/photos-the-hidden-lives-of-teen-moms>
- Briones, K. J. and del Mundo, M. D. "Policy Brief: Number of births during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines: January 2020 to May 2021," UNFPA (unpublished)
- DepEd. (2018). Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Developing Responsible Youth vs. Rising Risks. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/2018/08/04/comprehensive-sexuality-education-developing-responsible-youth-vs-rising-risks/?fbclid=IwAR2y13ümdYRrKz5L-jKgrileY2sa6VGE_DaAsYb-GHDnFDRdWYvknqYO
- Franjic, S., (n.d). Adolescent Pregnancy is a Serious Social Problem. Retrieved from <https://www.peertechz.com/articles/IGRO-4-149.php>
- ILO (International Labour Organization). (2019). Tackling Gender Inequalities and the Social and Economic Costs of Adolescent Pregnancy in Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--asia/--ro-bangkok/--sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_735169.pdf
- Kirby, D. (2007). Emerging answers 2007: Research findings on programs to reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. https://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/ea2007_full.pdf
- Montemayor, M.T., (2019). Integrating sex education in schools to empower learners. Retrieve from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1066447>
- Ordinario, C. "133,000 families will be led by minors in 2021 – Popcom," Business Mirror, 21 February 2021; available from <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/02/18/133000-families-will-be-led-by-minors-in-2021-popcom/>
- Osorio, G. (2020). What's Happening With Sex Education in the Philippines. Retrieved from: https://www.modernfilipina.ph/health/health-issues/sex-education-in-the-philippines?fbclid=IwAROFWQl_eqvX1-MNtyEmUic33rGKSL6w_89ZDMHptIHKRxxkCN_uStBO-M4
- Philippine Statistics Authority, "Excel File: Number of Registered Live Births by Adolescent Mother, and by Month of Occurrence, Philippines: 2006-2019," 28 October 2021; available from https://www.foi.gov.ph/requests/aglzfmVmb2kteGhyHQsSB0Nvbn_RlbnQiEFBTQS00OTE1MTg0ODA2ODMM
- Philippine Statistics Authority. (2021). Births in the Philippines, 2019. <https://psa.gov.ph/vital-statistics/id/147104>
- Salvador, J. T., Sauce, B. R. J., (2016) The Phenomenon of Teenage Pregnancy in the Philippines. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 12(32), 173. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n32p173>
- Santelli, J., Ott, M. A., Lyon, M., Rogers, J., Summers, D., & Schleifer, R. (2006). Abstinence and abstinence-only education: A review of U.S. policies and programs. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(1), 72-81
- Sedgh, G., Finer, L. B., Bankole, A., Eilers, M. A., & Singh, S. (2016). Adolescent pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates across countries: Levels and recent trends. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(2), 223–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.09.007>
- Svanemyr, J., Chandra-Mouli, V., Christiansen, C. S., Mbizvo, M., & Amin, A. (2018). Preventing Child Marriage Through Sexuality Education: The Balika Samridhhi Programme in India. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 26(2), 11-21
- Tolman, D. L., & McClelland, S. I. (2011). Normative sexuality development in adolescence: A decade in review, 2000-2009. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 242-255
- UNESCO. (2018). Why comprehensive sexuality education is important. Building peace in the minds of men and women. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/news/why-comprehensive-sexuality-education-important>
- UNFPA (2020) Eliminating Teenage Pregnancy in the Philippines. Retrieved from https://philippines.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_Policy_Brief_Teenage_Pregnancy_%282020-01-24%29.pdf
- United Nations Population Fund. (2019). Teenage pregnancy in the Philippines. <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/teenage-pregnancy-philippines>
- United Nations Population Fund. (2020). Teenage pregnancy. <https://www.unfpa.org/teenage-pregnancy>
- World Bank. (2021). Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) - Philippines. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=PH>
- World Health Organization. (2021). Adolescent pregnancy. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>

Appendix A

Instrument of the Study

 POPCOM <small>Philippine Office of Population and Family Planning</small>		PRE & POST TEST QUESTIONNAIRE		
		Series of 2024		
City Social Welfare & Development Office • Population Welfare Division				
Pangalan ng Mag-aaral:				
Seksyon at Baitang:		Edad:		
Title of Activity Attended: "Abot Kamay na Pangarap, Huwag Ipagpalit sa Sandaling Sarap"				
Petsa:		Venue:		
I. Instructions: Isulat ang T kung TAMA ang pahayag at M kung mali ang pahayag. (25 items)				
MGA TANONG			PRE-TEST	POST TEST
1.	Ang Puberty ay ang panahon kung saan nagbabago ang pisikal na katawan ng babae at lalake. Ito ay nangyayare sa lahat nang sabay sabay.			
2.	Dapat mag-alala ang mga lalaki at babae na hindi pa kasing tangkad ng kanilang mga kaibigan at kaklase. May mali sa kanila. Dapat silang kumunsulta sa isang doktor.			
3.	Kapag ang mga babae ay nagsimulang magkaroon ng regla, nangangahulugan ito na sila ay may sakit.			
4.	Dahil ang kabataan ay maaari nang magbuntis o makabuntis, hindi sila dapat basta-basta makisali sa mga sekswal na aktibidad.			
5.	Ang mga kabataang lalaki ay walang kahaharaping panganiib sa kalusugan kung sila ay nakikipagtalik.			
6.	Ang pagkamabunga ng tao ay ang kapasidad para sa isang babae na mabuntis at para sa isang lalaki na makabuntis.			
7.	Ang babaeng baog ay may kakayahang makapagbuntis.			
8.	Ang tamod ay maaaring mabuhay ng hanggang 3 hanggang 5 araw sa loob ng katawan ng isang babae kapag naabot na nila ang matris			
9.	Sa edad na 9-12 parehong lalaki at babae ay nagsisimula sa kanilang yugto ng pagbibinata at pagdadalaga.			
10.	Ang isang mayabong na itlog na nagmula sa obaryo ng babae ay maaaring mabuhay ng hanggang 12-24 na oras.			
11.	Ang fallopian tube ay ang reproductive na bahagi ng babae na lumilikha ng egg cell.			
12.	Ang kabataang nakikisali sa mga sekswal na aktibidad sa unang pagkakataon ay hindi magreresulta sa pagbubuntis.			
13.	Ang pakikipagtalik sa panahon ng obulasyon ay walang posibilidad na magbuntis ng isang bata.			
14.	Ang egg cell ay inilalabas lamang sa panahon ng obulasyon at nangyayari minsan sa bawat cycle.			
15.	Kapag hindi naglabas ng tamod ang lalaki, ang kanyang semilya ay maiipon at puputok ang kanyang titi at bayag.			
16.	Kapag ang bababe ay hindi niregla, ibig sabihin siya ay buntis.			
17.	Ang pagreregla ay ang pinakaimportanteng pangyayari sa siklo ng fertilidad ng isang babae.			
18.	Ang lalake ay maaaring makabuntis sa pamamagitan ng isang beses na pakikipagtalik.			
19.	"Wet dreams" o paglabas ng tamod at semilya ay natural na nangyayari.			
20.	Ang semilyang nadeposito sa loob ng katawan ng babae ay namamatay kaagad.			
21.	Ang regla ay maruming dugo.			
22.	Ang pakikipagtalik sa araw na hindi mabunga ang babae ay puwedeng humantong sa pagbubuntis.			
23.	Ang utak ay hindi kasama sa reproduction.			
24.	Ang baby ay resulta ng pakikipagtalik lamang na sa araw na mabunga ang babae.			
25.	Ang lalakeng hindi pa tula ay hindi makabuntis.			

 POPCOM Population Welfare Division		PRE & POST TEST QUESTIONNAIRE	
		Series of 2024	
City Social Welfare & Development Office • Population Welfare Division			
II. Fill in the blanks (16 items)			
PRE-TEST Ano ano ang sanhi ng pagbubuntis ng maaga? (Kung hindi alam ang sagot, guhitan ito. Ex: 1. -----) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	POST-TEST Ano ano ang sanhi ng pagbubuntis ng maaga? (Kung hindi alam ang sagot, guhitan ito. Ex: 1. -----) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.		
PRE-TEST Ano ano ang epekto ng pagiging batang ina at batang ama? (Kung hindi alam ang sagot, guhitan ito. Ex: 1. -----) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.	POST-TEST Ano ano ang epekto ng pagiging batang ina at batang ama? (Kung hindi alam ang sagot, guhitan ito. Ex: 1. -----) 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.		

Page 2 of 2

File Name: Pre-Post-Test-Questionnaire.docx