

Prolonged Parental Absence and Adolescent Well-Being in Overseas Filipino Worker Families.

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Abstract

Prolonged parental migration reshapes adolescents' emotional development, family relationships, health practices, and everyday functioning beyond its economic benefits. Despite extensive scholarship on transnational families, limited evidence explains how these interconnected experiences are negotiated simultaneously among Filipino adolescents. This inquiry explored the lived experiences of 18 adolescents from Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) families in Zamboanga City using a qualitative phenomenological design and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed that prolonged parental absence fostered emotional maturity, independent decision-making, adaptive self-management, and personal responsibility while sustaining persistent longing for parental presence. Participants likewise reconstructed family and social relationships by relying on relatives, peers, teachers, and other supportive individuals to reinforce emotional stability and resilience. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that adolescent well-being within transnational families emerge through the dynamic interaction of emotional adaptation, evolving family connectedness, adaptive health behaviors, and supportive social networks that collectively sustain adjustment despite prolonged parental separation...

Keywords: Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW); Adolescents; Parental Absence; Emotional Well-Being; Transnational Families.

Introduction

Global labor migration continues to reshape contemporary family structures, particularly in the Philippines where overseas employment remains an enduring socioeconomic strategy for household advancement. Although financial remittances generated by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) substantially improve educational opportunities and material security, prolonged parental absence simultaneously transforms adolescents' emotional experiences, interpersonal relationships, and everyday patterns of self-management. Existing studies have predominantly emphasized economic gains, educational attainment, and general psychosocial outcomes, while comparatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding how adolescents actively negotiate the convergence of emotional adaptation, health-related behaviors, and evolving family relationships within transnational households. Beyond these personal consequences, prolonged parental migration also influences adolescents' broader social functioning by reshaping peer interaction, community participation, and social connectedness, thereby extending its implications beyond the immediate family environment.

Adolescence represents a developmental period characterized by heightened emotional sensitivity, identity consolidation, and increasing independence, making sustained parental absence particularly consequential. Stable parental guidance provides emotional reassurance, behavioral regulation, and consistent socialization that collectively facilitate healthy developmental trajectories (Cutillas et al., 2025; Chavez et al., 2023). Within transnational families, however, caregiving responsibilities frequently transition to grandparents or other relatives, creating diversified authority structures that differ in disciplinary practices, emotional responsiveness, and supervisory capacity. Acedera and Yeoh (2022) explain that transnational parenting reconstructs familial intimacy by substituting direct parental presence with technologically mediated interactions, while Tan et al. (2025) observe that although migration frequently strengthens household financial stability, delegated caregiving generates heterogeneous emotional experiences among adolescents. Complementing these observations, May and Krishna (2026) reported that Filipino adolescents commonly experience simultaneous gratitude for parental sacrifice and persistent feelings of emotional detachment, illustrating the complex coexistence of appreciation and psychological vulnerability during prolonged separation.

Contemporary communication technologies have expanded opportunities for geographically separated families to sustain regular interaction; nevertheless, virtual communication does not consistently reproduce the emotional reassurance associated with sustained physical presence. Kansal et al. (2025) describe digital communication as a mechanism that preserves relational continuity despite geographical distance, yet mediated conversations frequently lack the immediacy required to address emotionally demanding circumstances. Consequently, adolescents may encounter challenges articulating psychological concerns, particularly when interactions become transactional or predominantly focused on academic performance and financial matters. Steinhoff et al. (2024) further demonstrate that adolescents exhibit diverse adaptive responses under these circumstances, ranging from strengthened independence and personal responsibility to emotional withdrawal and maladaptive behavioral routines. These contrasting patterns suggest that coping cannot be adequately interpreted solely through resilience or vulnerability, but instead reflects a multidimensional process influenced by family interaction, emotional support, and individual self-regulation.

The influence of prolonged parental migration likewise extends into adolescents' physical well-being and everyday health practices, although these dimensions have frequently been examined independently from emotional adjustment. Structured parental supervision ordinarily reinforces consistent sleep schedules, nutritional practices, self-care behaviors, and balanced daily routines; however, diminished supervision may alter these practices as adolescents assume greater personal responsibility. Evidence indicates that irregular eating behaviors, disrupted sleep patterns, and inconsistent health management become more prevalent within transnational family arrangements (Maia et al., 2025), while adolescence itself represents a critical developmental stage during which enduring health behaviors are established (Parajuli et al., 2025). Emotional distress may additionally manifest through physiological consequences including fatigue, reduced psychological resilience, and compromised physical functioning (O'Neill et al., 2021). Complementing these findings, Alvero et al. (2026) emphasize that cohesive family interaction ordinarily promotes structured daily living, whereas Chavez et al. (2025) demonstrate that continued parental involvement strengthens adolescents' behavioral discipline and adaptive learning practices despite challenging circumstances. Collectively, these perspectives indicate that emotional well-being, family relationships, physical health, and social adjustment operate as interconnected dimensions of adolescent development rather than isolated experiences.

Despite extensive scholarly attention devoted to migration-related family arrangements, important conceptual and empirical limitations remain unresolved. Existing literature frequently examines emotional distress, family relationships, health behaviors, and coping practices as independent phenomena rather than mutually reinforcing experiences that simultaneously shape adolescents' everyday lives. Karhina et al. (2023), Molina et al. (2025), and Marlie and Gina (2025) collectively demonstrate that prolonged parental absence alters emotional security and attachment, whereas Joya et al. (2024) and Fauk et al. (2024) further indicate that emotional reassurance becomes increasingly dependent upon the quality of substitute caregiving and meaningful interpersonal communication. Likewise, Pan et al. (2021), Uy et al. (2020), Murro et al. (2023), and the University of the Philippines Population Institute (2022) describe how migration restructures household authority, caregiving responsibilities, and family cohesion, creating relational environments that differ substantially across households. According to the University of the Philippines Population Institute (2022), parental migration or parents working away from home accounted for approximately 45% of cases in which Filipino youth were not raised by both biological parents, while marital separation contributed 38%. The report further noted that growing up without both parents is associated with lower self-esteem, reduced life satisfaction, and diminished happiness among Filipino youth. Consistent with these findings, Dominguez and Hall (2022) emphasized that prolonged parental migration exposes left-behind Filipino children to a broad range of adverse emotional and mental health outcomes, including loneliness, anxiety, sadness, stress, and depressive symptoms, underscoring the psychological burden associated with extended parental absence.

Health regulation likewise remains insufficiently integrated within prevailing discussions of transnational family life. Existing evidence demonstrates that reduced parental supervision may contribute to irregular nutrition, disrupted sleeping habits, weakened daily routines, and diminished consistency in self-care behaviors (Maia et al., 2025; Parajuli et al., 2025). Emotional strain may further manifest through physical exhaustion, psychological vulnerability, and impaired physiological functioning, illustrating the reciprocal association between emotional and bodily well-being (O'Neill et al., 2021). Beyond household influences, adolescents also negotiate broader social environments that shape health-related behaviors through peer relationships, school participation, community engagement, and exposure to differing social expectations. Simultaneously, coping responses emerge through interactions with family members, peers, and community networks rather than individual adaptation alone. Zimmer-Gembeck et al. (2021), Durcan (2025), Roman et al. (2025), and Xu (2026) collectively emphasize that resilience develops through supportive interpersonal systems, structured routines, and accessible social resources instead of personal determination in isolation. These observations suggest that adolescents' emotional adaptation, physical health, and social functioning represent interconnected developmental experiences that cannot be adequately understood through fragmented analytical perspectives.

Although previous scholarship has substantially advanced understanding of adolescents living within transnational families, limited evidence explains how Filipino adolescents nearing the transition into adulthood actively interpret, negotiate, and sustain emotional stability, family connectedness, health-related behaviors, and social functioning throughout prolonged parental absence. Existing discussions predominantly emphasize observable outcomes, including resilience, psychological distress, behavioral adjustment, or academic performance, while providing comparatively less attention to the continuous processes through which adolescents regulate emotions, preserve interpersonal relationships, establish everyday routines, and construct meaningful support systems under conditions of sustained parental separation. Consequently, the dynamic interaction among emotional well-being, family relationships, health practices, and broader social experiences remains insufficiently conceptualized within a unified explanatory framework.

Examination of adolescents lived experiences that recognize emotional adaptation, family relationships, physical well-being, coping behaviors, and social connectedness as mutually influential dimensions of everyday life rather than discrete developmental outcomes. Such an orientation provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Filipino adolescents sustain psychological stability, regulate health practices, cultivate interpersonal relationships, and negotiate social responsibilities while parental care is exercised across national borders. Synthesizing these interconnected dimensions, the present inquiry seeks to advance contemporary understanding of adolescent development within transnational Filipino families and contribute a more holistic perspective on the multidimensional consequences of prolonged parental migration.

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of adolescents whose parent(s) are employed overseas as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Phenomenology is particularly appropriate for examining how individuals interpret, construct, and attribute meaning to shared life experiences, especially those involving prolonged parental absence, emotional adaptation, family interaction, and everyday health-related practices. Rather than emphasizing observable outcomes alone, this approach facilitates a comprehensive exploration of how adolescents continuously negotiate emotional well-being, sustain family connectedness, regulate daily routines, and manage broader social functioning within transnational family arrangements. A semi-structured interview format was adopted to encourage flexible yet focused conversations, enabling participants to articulate experiences beyond predetermined questions while remaining aligned with the objectives of the inquiry. This strategy generated rich narratives that captured the interconnected nature of emotional experiences, family relationships, health practices, social interaction, and everyday self-management under conditions of sustained parental migration.

Participants and Sampling

The participants comprised 18 adolescents aged 18–19 years residing in Zamboanga City, each having at least one parent currently employed abroad as an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW). All participants had experienced a minimum of one year of continuous parental absence to ensure sufficient exposure to the phenomenon under investigation. They were residing with the remaining parents, grandparents, or other relatives serving as their primary caregivers throughout the period of parental migration. Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit information-rich participants capable of providing comprehensive and experience-based narratives consistent with the objectives of the inquiry. Eligibility criteria included: (1) current school enrollment or recent completion of secondary education; (2) ability to communicate personal experiences effectively in either English or Filipino; and (3) willingness to discuss experiences related to emotional well-being, family relationships, health practices, social interaction, and the management of everyday responsibilities. Participant selection emphasized the capacity to provide reflective and meaningful accounts that illuminate how adolescents navigate emotional adjustment, interpersonal relationships, daily self-regulation, and broader social experiences while living within transnational family settings.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed based on the study objectives. It consisted of open-ended questions focusing on emotional experiences, changes in family relationships, and health-related practices, with follow-up prompts used to clarify and expand participants' responses. The interview guide underwent content validation through peer review to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Minor revisions were made to improve coherence and minimize ambiguity. The instrument was designed to elicit comprehensive narratives that reflected participants' lived experiences. Table 1 presents the alignment between the study objectives and the corresponding interview questions.

Objectives	Interview questions
To examine how prolonged parental absence resulting from overseas employment shapes adolescents' emotional well-being, family relationships, social functioning, and everyday self-management within transnational family settings.	How has your parents' overseas employment influenced your emotional well-being, social interactions, and the way you manage your everyday life while growing up? How have your relationships with your parents, family members, peers, and other significant people changed since your parents began working overseas?
To explore how adolescents sustain their well-being through adaptive health behaviors, coping processes, supportive social resources, and everyday life management during prolonged parental absence.	How has your parents' prolonged absence influenced the ways you maintain your physical well-being, emotional balance, and everyday routines? What situations have made it difficult to sustain healthy routines, emotional stability, and social support while your parents are working overseas?

Data Gathering Procedure

Before commencing data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals from appropriate school authorities and relevant community representatives. Participants and, where applicable, their guardians received a comprehensive explanation regarding the objectives of the inquiry, data collection procedures, voluntary participation, confidentiality measures, and their corresponding rights throughout the process. Written informed consent and assent were secured prior to participation. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in quiet and private environments, either within school premises or in mutually agreed locations that promoted comfort, privacy, and open communication. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' permission to ensure accurate documentation. Throughout every interview, the researcher maintained a neutral and non-directive position, encouraging participants to describe their lived experiences freely, including emotional adaptation, family interaction, everyday decision-making, health-related routines, and social experiences, without interruption, coercion, or evaluative judgment.

Data Analysis

The collected narratives were analyzed using thematic analysis to systematically identify recurrent patterns, shared meanings, and variations across participants lived experiences. Audio-recorded interviews were first transcribed verbatim to preserve the completeness and accuracy of participants' accounts. The transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to establish familiarity with the dataset before initiating the coding process. Initial coding involved a meticulous line-by-line examination of significant statements describing emotional experiences, family relationships, health practices, social interaction, and everyday self-management. Related codes were subsequently organized into broader conceptual categories based on recurring similarities and meaningful relationships. These categories served as the analytical foundation for developing themes that represented the collective experiences of adolescents living within transnational family environments.

To enhance analytical rigor and credibility, thematic development followed an iterative process involving continuous comparison between emerging themes and the original transcripts. Preliminary interpretations were repeatedly refined to ensure conceptual consistency, representativeness, and faithful reflection of participants' narratives. Divergent accounts and nuanced variations were carefully re-examined to strengthen interpretative depth rather than eliminate differences. The resulting thematic structure provided an integrated representation of how adolescents negotiated emotional well-being, family connectedness, health-related behaviors, social functioning, and everyday adaptive processes throughout prolonged parental absence.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were rigorously observed throughout every stage of the inquiry to safeguard participants' rights, dignity, and overall well-being. Prior to participation, all participants received detailed information regarding the purpose of the inquiry, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality protocols, and their right to discontinue participation at any point without consequence. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and personally identifiable information was excluded from transcripts and subsequent reports to preserve anonymity. Considering the potentially sensitive nature of discussing parental absence, emotional experiences, family relationships, social interactions, and personal coping processes, interviews were conducted with empathy, respect, and sensitivity. Participants were never compelled to respond to questions that generated discomfort, and interviews were temporarily paused, redirected, or discontinued whenever signs of emotional distress were observed. All digital recordings, interview transcripts, and related research materials were securely stored in password-protected files accessible solely to the researcher. The collected information was used exclusively for

academic purposes and will be disposed of in accordance with established institutional ethical guidelines upon completion of the study.

Results

Objective 1. To examine how prolonged parental absence resulting from overseas employment shapes adolescents' emotional well-being, family relationships, social functioning, and everyday self-management within transnational family settings.

Question 1. *How has your parents' overseas employment influenced your emotional well-being, social interactions, and the way you manage your everyday life while growing up?*

1.1 Emotional Maturity Amid Persistent Longing

Eight (8) participants described prolonged parental absence as a circumstance that accelerated emotional maturity while simultaneously sustaining an enduring desire for parental closeness. Participants explained that independence, confidence, and personal responsibility gradually emerged through necessity rather than preference. Nevertheless, significant achievements and emotionally demanding situations frequently revived feelings of incompleteness because parental affirmation remained physically inaccessible. Beyond fostering individual resilience, these experiences also influenced participants' confidence in social settings, where emotional independence often coexisted with an unspoken desire for familial reassurance.

"Living with my relatives helped me become responsible at an early age, yet there are moments when I quietly compare my life with friends whose parents are always present. I appreciate my parents' sacrifices, but the feeling of missing them never completely disappears."

"People often tell me that I am mature for my age, but they do not realize that maturity came from learning to face many situations alone. Even when I smile during important occasions, there is still a part of me wishing my parents were physically beside me."

1.2 Independent Decisions Within Social Adjustment

Ten (10) participants explained that prolonged parental absence substantially influenced how they managed everyday responsibilities and interacted with other people. Participants reported becoming more self-reliant when making daily decisions involving school, household obligations, finances, and personal routines because immediate parental guidance was unavailable. Simultaneously, they described carefully adjusting their behavior within their relatives' households, peer groups, and school environments to maintain harmonious relationships and avoid becoming an additional burden to others.

"I usually decide things on my own because my parents are abroad and I cannot always wait for their advice. Before making decisions, I think carefully about how my actions will affect the people I live with because I do not want to create additional problems for them."

"Since my parents left, I learned to organize my own schedule, manage school responsibilities, and solve personal concerns independently. At the same time, I became more careful when interacting with classmates and relatives because I always wanted to fit into different situations."

Question 2. *How have your relationships with your parents, family members, peers, and other significant people changed since your parents began working overseas?*

2.1 Maintaining Connection Across Distance

Nine (9) participants described that although communication with their parents remained consistent through digital platforms, their interactions gradually became centered on practical concerns rather than emotional conversations. Exchanges commonly revolved around academic progress, financial needs, and daily updates, while opportunities for meaningful emotional disclosure became increasingly limited. Consequently, participants frequently relied on peers, siblings, or caregivers for immediate emotional reassurance, resulting in gradual shifts in their interpersonal support networks.

"We communicate regularly through video calls and messages, but our conversations usually focus on school, expenses, or daily routines. I rarely tell them everything I feel because I do not want them to worry while they are working abroad."

"Even though we talk almost every week, I sometimes feel that our conversations have become predictable. When I experience personal problems, I usually discuss them first with my friends or my aunt because they are physically present."

2.2 Belonging Through Adaptive Relationships

Nine (9) participants explained that prolonged parental absence required continuous adjustment within their households and broader social environments. Living with grandparents or relatives encouraged them to develop respectful relationships while adapting to different family expectations, household routines, and interpersonal boundaries. Several participants also emphasized that friendships became increasingly meaningful because peers provided companionship, encouragement, and emotional acceptance during challenging situations.

"My closest friends became the people I usually depended on whenever I felt overwhelmed. They listened without judging me, and that helped me feel accepted even when my parents were far away."

"I learned that family is not only about living in the same house. My relatives, teachers, and friends became important sources of guidance, but there are still moments when I wish my parents could personally experience those moments with me."

Objective 2. To explore how adolescents sustain their well-being through adaptive health behaviors, coping processes, supportive social resources, and everyday life management during prolonged parental absence.

Question 1. *How has your parents' prolonged absence influenced the ways you maintain your physical well-being, emotional balance, and everyday routines?*

1.1 Self-Reliance Through Adaptive Responsibility

Seven (7) participants described that prolonged parental absence gradually transformed everyday responsibilities into opportunities for developing personal accountability and adaptive life management. Rather than depending upon continuous parental supervision, participants learned to organize household obligations, academic requirements, personal health practices, and daily decision-making independently. Although these responsibilities initially emerged from necessity, participants eventually recognized that consistent self-management strengthened their confidence and preparedness for future challenges.

"Since my parents were abroad, I learned how to prepare my own meals, organize my schedule, and make important decisions without waiting for someone to tell me what to do. It was difficult at first, but over time it became part of my everyday life."

"I became more mindful of how I spend my time because I know my parents are working hard overseas. Managing my responsibilities helped me become more disciplined even when nobody constantly reminds me."

2.2 Balancing Independence with Personal Well-Being

Nine (9) participants explained that maintaining personal well-being requires continuous adjustment between fulfilling responsibilities and attending to their own physical and emotional needs. While participants consistently attempted to preserve healthy routines, they acknowledged that academic demands, emotional stress, and household obligations occasionally disrupted these efforts. Several participants emphasized that self-care gradually evolved into an intentional practice requiring conscious decision-making rather than parental supervision.

"I remind myself to eat properly, sleep on time, and avoid unhealthy habits because I know nobody else will consistently monitor me. It became my own responsibility to maintain my health."

"Instead of waiting for someone to motivate me, I learned to encourage myself whenever I feel physically or emotionally exhausted. I realized that maintaining my well-being starts with my own daily choices."

Question 2. *What situations have made it difficult to sustain healthy routines, emotional stability, and social support while your parents are working overseas?*

2.1 Maintaining Stability Without Supervision

Eight (8) participants reported that the absence of continuous parental supervision made sustaining consistent routines more challenging, particularly during academically demanding or emotionally stressful periods. Participants described difficulties maintaining balanced sleep, nutrition, time management, and personal discipline because immediate parental guidance was unavailable. Nevertheless, many gradually developed practical strategies to restore routine and remain productive despite these obstacles.

"There are moments when I stay awake too late because of school requirements or overthinking, but I eventually learned that maintaining a healthy routine helps me perform better in everything I do."

"Without my parents around, I realized that discipline depends largely on my own decisions. Some days are difficult, but I continue trying to improve my daily habits."

2.2 Support Networks Reinforcing Resilience

Eleven (11) participants emphasized that overcoming everyday challenges depended greatly on the availability of trustworthy social relationships. Although parental encouragement remained meaningful despite geographical

separation, participants frequently relied upon siblings, relatives, close friends, teachers, and other supportive individuals for immediate emotional reassurance and practical guidance. Participants consistently described social support as a complementary resource that strengthened adaptation rather than replacing parental affection.

"Whenever I experience personal difficulties, I usually talk to my grandmother or my closest friend because they understand what I am going through. Their support helps me stay emotionally stable."

"My teachers and classmates became important sources of encouragement, especially during stressful periods in school. Knowing that people genuinely care motivates me to keep moving forward."

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that prolonged parental absence associated with overseas employment reshapes adolescents' emotional development, interpersonal relationships, and everyday self-management through a continuous process of adaptation rather than a fixed psychological outcome. Participants described becoming emotionally mature and increasingly independent while simultaneously experiencing a persistent longing for parental presence during meaningful life events. These experiences indicate that emotional growth and emotional absence coexist rather than contradict one another, suggesting that adolescents gradually construct stability while remaining aware of the relational limitations created by geographical separation. Such patterns directly address the first objective by showing that parental migration influences emotional well-being alongside family relationships and everyday functioning. Bermoy and Orbegoso (2023) explain that transnational parenting reconstructs intimacy through technology-mediated interaction rather than physical presence, while Muzingili (2025) further observes that adolescents simultaneously experience gratitude for parental sacrifice and emotional detachment. The present findings extend these perspectives by demonstrating that emotional maturity develops alongside enduring desires for parental closeness instead of replacing them. Likewise, Fatima et al. (2021) emphasize that parental absence influences adolescents' emotional adjustment, whereas Dawra (2025) explains that communication lacking emotional depth weakens opportunities for meaningful emotional expression. Consistent with these perspectives, participants maintained regular communication with their parents, yet emotionally significant experiences continued to reinforce the importance of physical presence beyond routine digital interaction.

The findings further reveal that prolonged parental migration restructures adolescents' relational environments by broadening the sources from which emotional and social support are obtained. Although communication with parents remained consistent, conversations frequently centered on practical matters, leading adolescents to rely more heavily on grandparents, relatives, teachers, and peers for immediate guidance and emotional reassurance. Rather than replacing parental relationships, these interpersonal networks complemented parental support by helping adolescents negotiate everyday challenges and sustain social connectedness. Langlais et al. (2024) argue that diminished parental presence alters emotional attachment within families, while digital communication primarily preserves relational continuity across distance. The present findings refine this understanding by demonstrating that technology successfully maintains family contact but cannot consistently provide the immediacy of emotional reassurance required during personally significant situations. Similarly, Ruiz and Yabut (2024) explain that reduced parental supervision promotes adolescent autonomy. Participants developed greater confidence in making independent decisions while simultaneously adjusting their behaviors within family, school, and peer environments to preserve harmonious relationships. These findings indicate that adolescents' social functioning evolves through adaptive interaction with multiple support systems rather than through parental relationships alone.

The present findings likewise indicate that adolescents sustain their well-being by progressively assuming responsibility for their health practices, emotional regulation, and everyday routines despite limited parental supervision. Participants described independently managing household responsibilities, academic obligations, nutrition, rest, and personal discipline while recognizing that these routines required deliberate effort to remain consistent. Nevertheless, emotionally demanding and academically intensive situations occasionally disrupt these practices, illustrating that independence does not automatically ensure balanced self-care. The World Health Organization (2021) emphasizes that supportive guidance plays a central role in promoting healthy behavioral routines throughout adolescence, while Attia et al. (2022) explain that emotional strain frequently influences physical and behavioral functioning. Consistent with these perspectives, participants continuously balanced personal responsibilities with their own emotional and physical well-being, demonstrating that adaptive self-management requires ongoing regulation rather than complete self-sufficiency. These observations also correspond with Favini et al. (2025), who describe adolescence as a developmental period characterized by substantial emotional, cognitive, and behavioral transformation, during which lifelong patterns of health-related behavior gradually emerge.

Findings demonstrate that adolescents' capacity to adapt is strengthened through supportive interpersonal relationships that reinforce resilience under conditions of prolonged parental absence. Although participants developed self-reliance in managing everyday responsibilities, they consistently identified siblings, relatives,

friends, teachers, and other trusted individuals as important sources of emotional encouragement and practical guidance. These relationships did not eliminate the effects of parental absence but enabled adolescents to maintain psychological stability while fulfilling daily responsibilities. Støre et al. (2025) describe coping as an active process through which adolescents manage internal and external demands, whereas resilience is strengthened through supportive environments rather than individual capacity alone. The present findings reinforce this perspective by showing that adolescents' adaptive behaviors emerged through continuous interaction with available social resources instead of personal determination in isolation. Adolescent adjustment within transnational Filipino families is best understood as an integrated process in which emotional maturity, evolving family relationships, adaptive self-management, and supportive social networks collectively sustain well-being despite the continuing realities of parental migration.

Conclusion

Prolonged parental absence resulting from overseas employment represents a multidimensional developmental experience that extends beyond emotional separation to influence adolescents' family relationships, health practices, social functioning, and everyday self-management. The findings demonstrate that adolescents do not merely endure parental absence but actively cultivate emotional maturity, adaptive self-regulation, and meaningful interpersonal connections while navigating the continuing realities of transnational family life. Although emotional longing for parental presence persists, supportive relationships with relatives, peers, and other significant individuals reinforce resilience and contribute to sustained well-being. Integrating emotional adaptation, evolving family connectedness, adaptive health behaviors, and social support within a unified perspective, the findings advance a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent well-being in Overseas Filipino Worker families and underscore that successful adjustment emerges through the continuous interaction of these interconnected dimensions rather than through any single developmental outcome.

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