

Family and Home Factors that Facilitate Talent Development and Achievement Among Distinguished Filipino Women

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Abstract

In 2009, fifteen distinguished Filipino women from the fields of entrepreneurship, government and media participated in a qualitative research to examine their talent development and achievement. This article discusses a part of that study, specifically the positive effects of (1) parents' educational attainment, (2) parenting styles, (3) home environments, and (4) individuals who influenced their development and achievement. Results show that the participants were generally raised by college educated parents. However, whatever their educational attainments were, the parents believed that providing education to their daughters was important for their future. Half of the parents demonstrated authoritative parenting styles. The participants were raised in homes which generally (a) emphasized independence or interdependence, (b) focused on the child, (c) had varying levels of stress, (d) gave importance to family members helping one another, and (e) had low to moderate levels of parental warmth. Among the persons significant to their development and achievements were their parents, spouses, and children. Implications on parenting, teaching and guiding gifted, creative and talented girls are discussed.

Introduction

In any given school, one finds gifted, creative and talented students. Intellectually gifted students achieve very high scores in standardized tests and usually succeed academically. They possess superior abilities in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and display outstanding critical thinking as well

as problem solving skills. They effortlessly obtain, store, and manipulate information. Meanwhile, the creative and talented possess exceptional abilities in particular areas, usually in the performing or visual arts. They are independent and think outside of the conventional. Artistic, open-minded and independent, they either create original products or innovate and improve what already exists.

Despite these characteristics, some gifted, creative and talented girls fail to perform and achieve according to the promise or potential they demonstrate (Dowdall and Colangelo 1982). Underachievement has been attributed to factors such as school (Rimm 1997), peers (Reis and McCoach 2000), family, and emotional and motivational factors (Butler-Por 1987).

Closer to home, Filipino females also struggle to fully develop their abilities. More often than not, their families' lack of resources limits their access to quality education. The belief that "the woman's place is in the home" persists even today, which hinders them from pursuing their dreams such as acquiring higher learning or starting their own enterprises.

A study that examined the talent development and achievement of fifteen (15) distinguished Filipino women was undertaken by the author in 2009. It was hoped that the findings would inspire Filipino women (especially those who perform below their promise) to improve their lives and fulfill their dreams by providing them with role models of resilience, self-actualization, and achievement.

Problem statement. This article presents the results of a section of that study which pertains to family factors that facilitated talent development and achievement. It answers the following questions: (a) How did parents' educational attainment, parenting styles, and home environments facilitate distinguished Filipino women's talent development and achievement? (b) Who were the most significant individuals in their talent development? and (c) What were their influences?

Significance of the study. The study will benefit parents of gifted and creative female students. Parents will be able to comprehend their vital roles in the transformation of their children's potentials into high performance. It is hoped that the results of the study will motivate fathers and mothers to be more supportive of their daughters' aspirations, just as they are supportive of their sons. It is hoped, too, that they will be encouraged to become parental models of achievement for their daughters.

The findings will guide experts on gifted education, school administrators and guidance counselors in developing programs aimed at helping parents effectively nurture their daughters.

Theoretical basis. Talent development is catalyzed by environmental and intrapersonal factors, as well as chance (Gagné 1983). Environmental factors include, among others, the familial milieu and significant persons such as parents. For Piirto (1995), different *sun*s shine upon a person as talent is developed: sun of the home and family, sun of school, sun of society and culture, sun of gender, and sun of chance. The sun of home and family is the key since talent is first nurtured there by parents.

Parents are the first to recognize extreme gifts and talents in their children (Feldman and Piirto 1995) and introduce them to the talent field (Silverman 1993; Sloane 1985). They provide financial resources, time, and transportation to support them in various activities that encourage talent development. They help their children build social networks that can offer them emotional support (Bloom 1985). Parents directly provide early coaching and tutoring, and then search for more advanced teachers and specialized schools that best meet their daughters' needs (Lynch 1996). In fact, 1/3 to 1/2 of eminent women received direct instruction and encouragement from their fathers, mothers and other adults in their lives (Walberg, Williams, and Zeiser 2003).

The level of their parents' education influence children's beliefs, values, and child-rearing goals. According to Ricon (1983), high-achieving students are likely to have parents who are both college-educated. Walker and Smrekar (n.d. a) observed that parents with higher levels of academic attainment are more concerned with their children's learning, and possess and model acceptable social skills and problem-solving strategies. Their children develop a high regard for education, display confidence and belief in their abilities, work hard, and use successful learning strategies. The study of Potvin, Deslandes, and Lederer (1999) indicated that educated parents encourage and praise their children about school, discuss course options, attend school activities in which their children are engaged, and provide assistance with homework when asked. Thus, the youngsters are more likely to possess better self-concept, higher levels of self-esteem, and higher levels of achievement.

Parents, regardless of educational backgrounds, greatly influence their children's acceptance of their gifts and their transformation into exceptional performance by placing a high value on education and learning (*How Families Foster Talent Development* n.d.). A good education is generally believed by Filipino parents to be a means of acquiring status (Lardizabal 1988).

Baumrind (1966) described three parenting styles. *Authoritarian* parenting is highly demanding of children to conform to and obey the rules set by their parents, but is not responsive to the needs of the children. Very little discussion of the rules and boundaries occurs between them. When a child fails, parents tend to scold and punish. *Authoritative* parenting is both demanding and responsive to children. Although rules are set and mature behavior is expected of children, they are more open to discussion and explanation. When children fail, parents tend to pardon and teach. *Permissive* parenting is more responsive than demanding. Parents are indulgent, do not require mature behavior of their children, and allow substantial self-regulation.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) suggested *uninvolved* parenting as the fourth parenting style. Uninvolved parents are not only detached from their children's lives, but they are also undemanding. They can even be rejecting and neglecting.

Gifted adults are known to have come from families of these three parenting styles (Feldman and Piirto 1995). An authoritative parenting style is associated with positive academic motivation and successful academic achievement. Such a style creates an environment wherein children's independence and individuality are encouraged, and children are involved in family decision making. Furthermore, high standards are expected for the children, and parents enjoy warm relationships with them (Marjoribanks n.d.). Girls raised through authoritative parenting are more likely to develop optimistic attitudes toward and beliefs about their achievement (Walker and Smrekar n.d. b).

Parents provide a *home environment* that either encourages or discourages learning and talent development. Creatively gifted children generally come from families that (a) emphasize independence, rather than interdependence; (b) are less focused on the child; (c) have, to some extent, tense family relationships; and (d) have more expressions of negative affect and competition between family members, giving rise to motivation toward power and dominance. On the other hand, high academic achievers usually come from families that are (a) cohesive, (b) child-focused, and (c) where parent-child identification is strong. These give rise to high levels of achievement motivation (Albert 1978 and 1983).

Such findings are congruent with the findings of Potvin, Deslandes, and Lederer (1999) who stated that parental warmth, supervision and emotional support significantly affect school achievement irrespective of parents' educational attainment or family structure.

Of the *important people* who influence the accomplishments of gifted individuals, *parents* are the foremost. According

to Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, and Arnold (n.d.), parents espouse and model the values that are favorable to talent development such as (a) giving importance to discovering and developing one's capabilities, (b) aiming to achieve at the highest level possible, (c) being independent of thought and expression, (d) preferring active recreational, cultural, and intellectual pursuits, (e) valuing of achievement, which puts importance on working hard, doing one's best in every task, and taking pride in their achievements and skills, and (f) valuing the talent area, which involves parents valuing, enjoying, and sharing the interest and experience with the children. For Burger (1993), the need for achievement is developed by supporting and encouraging the children to build a sense of personal proficiency. This is achieved by rewarding them and being enthusiastic for their accomplishments.

Hennig and Hackman (1964) explained that daughters who share healthy and special relationships with their fathers participate in activities traditionally regarded appropriate only for fathers and their sons. Their fathers consider them as girls who could accomplish much more than ordinary girls. Thus, the characteristics traditionally considered as male are developed in them: the drive to achieve, task orientation, enjoyment of competition, and the ability to take risks.

Husbands/partners are also influential to women's success (Subotnik and Arnold 1996). Women whose husbands or partners appreciate their careers and who are willing to make sacrifices for their wives' achievement have relationships which positively impact their professions.

However, studies also show that family factors can threaten the achievement of gifted, creative and talented girls. When families lack resources, parents usually opt to focus on the first-born male child's talent, and withhold their support for the female gifted child (Feldman and Goldsmith 1986; Radford 1990, all cited in Feldman and Piirto 1995). Some parents with low expectations and aspirations for their daughters consider

it wise and rewarding to focus on the talent development of sons. This offers a partial explanation to the phenomenon of underachievement among gifted girls.

Methodology

Organizations and respected leaders in the fields of entrepreneurship, government, and media were asked to nominate distinguished Filipino women. In this study, Filipino women were considered *distinguished* if they met at least three of the following criteria: (a) fulfilled their potentials as shown by the sheer volume, effectiveness, and exceptional quality of their work as judged by respected entities in their fields of endeavor, (b) received national and/or international awards, (c) hold or held positions of leadership in communities, organizations, or institutes, and (d) have created ideas and products which transformed their profession, fields of interest, or a social arena in certain ways (Noble, Subotnik, and Arnold 1996).

From the roster of nominees, fifteen women were selected and invited to participate in the study. They were assured that their identities would not be divulged and that precautions would be taken to ensure that no information would be given that would lead to their identification. Of the fifteen participants, two did not object to being identified: Governor Grace Padaca of Isabela Province and Dr. Thelma Clemente, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Capitol Medical Center. The identities of the other participants were hidden by means of pseudonyms. Table 1 presents the participants' demographic profile.

A researcher-made demographic questionnaire was used to elicit data regarding the educational attainment of the participants' parents. An interview schedule composed of close-ended and open-ended questions was utilized to obtain information regarding the family factors studied. Participants were shown descriptions of four parenting styles. They were asked to identify the styles each of their parents used in raising them and explain how these affected their journey towards achievement.

TABLE 1 Profile of participants

Participant	Age (Yrs.)	Field of Interest	Profession	Highest Educational Attainment
Grace	45	Government	Provincial Governor, Broadcaster	BS Business Administration, Major in Accounting
Patricia	63	Entrepreneurship	President and CEO of a shoes and bags enterprise	AB Speech and Drama
Thelma	87	Entrepreneurship	President and CEO, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Hospital Administrator	Doctor of Medicine, MA Hospital Administration
Janice	53	Entrepreneurship	CEO of a beverage company, Vice President of a steel fabrication enterprise	AB Hotel and Restaurant Management
Laya	56	Government	Sectoral Representative to the Philippine Congress, Activist	BS Business Economics
Lita	60	Government	Former Municipal Mayor, Entrepreneur and Certified Public Accountant	BS Accounting
Daniela	34	Media	Senior News Producer, Host, Writer, Women and Children's Advocate	BA Broadcasting, currently earning MA
Lily	47	Media	Radio and Television Host and News Anchor	AB Communications
Deborah	60	Entrepreneurship	President of a Christian development organization; Development Management Consultant	MA Management, Currently earning a Doctorate degree
Vanessa	62	Government	District Representative to the Philippine Congress, Managing Partner in a law firm	Bachelor of Law
Roxanne	63	Media	Actress and Executive Director of a welfare fund benefiting marginalized workers in the movie industry	AB Speech and Drama

TABLE 1 Profile of participants (continued)

Participant	Age (Yrs.)	Field of Interest	Profession	Highest Educational Attainment
Urduja	57	Media	Actress, Screenwriter, Production Designer	AB Communication Arts
La Chascona	42	Government	Sectoral Representative to the Philippine Congress	AB Social Sciences
Cecilia	84	Entrepreneurship	Founder and General Manager of a books, school and office supplies enterprise	High School
Francesca	62	Media	Chairman Emeritus of a multi-national advertising agency	AB Mass Communication and AB Journalism

Pairs of phrases which generally described home environments were presented to the participants. These phrases included (a) emphasis on independence or emphasis on interdependence, (b) focus on the child or less focus on the child, (c) generally high levels of stress or generally low to moderate levels of stress, (d) members competing or members pulling together and (e) high parental warmth or low to moderate parental warmth. From four paired phrases, the participants were asked to select one that was true of their home environment when they were growing up and to explain their answers.

Responses were noted and the frequencies and percentage of cases were

computed. Finally, participants were asked to identify and rank the most influential persons in their development and achievement. They were also asked to expound on their answers.

Frequency and percentage distribution were used to analyze quantitative data. Interviews were transcribed to ensure that answers and explanations were understood well and could be quoted to clarify results.

Findings

Parents' educational background. Table 2 presents the highest educational attainment of the participants' parents.

TABLE 2 Parents' highest educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Father	Mother	Total
Elementary	1	3	4
High School	0	1	1
Baccalaureate Undergraduate	2	1	3
Baccalaureate	7	6	13
Master's	2	3	5
Doctorate	2	0	2
Total	14	14	28

Only 14 participants provided information regarding the highest academic achievement of their parents. Interviews revealed that 23 out of 28 parents received at least a college education. Both parents of ten (10) women studied in college. Seven (7) fathers and six (6) mothers acquired Bachelor's degrees. Five (5) parents earned their Master's degrees but only two (2) of them had Doctorate degrees. Three (3) parents went to college or university but dropped out. This suggests that high-achieving students are likely to have parents who are both college-educated.

Well-educated parents of distinguished Filipinas loved to read and influenced their daughters to read, too. They supported their daughters' participation in school programs and attended them to witness their performances no matter if they played lead or supportive roles. They instilled in their daughters values and behaviors of studying hard, doing their best, and working diligently to overcome difficulties in school, especially in math subjects. They encouraged the pursuit of careers or professions for their daughters. Thus, the participants performed well in academics and extra-curricular activities.

Four of the 28 parents had elementary as their highest educational attainment. One of the 28 parents was able to study only until high school. The daughters proudly related that despite their humble academic achievements, their parents demonstrated business acumen, were "street smart", and had exceptional problem-solving abilities and creativity. As a result, daughters of humbly educated but street smart parents learned that any problem had a solution, and that they could utilize their knowledge, abilities, and creativity to solve it.

Whatever the level of their academic achievements, the participants' parents endeavored to send their daughters to school because they believed in the importance of education. Patricia's parents, both professionals, considered education as "a tool for a better life" for her and her sister. Lita's dying father, a farm hand in Central Luzon, foresaw the bleak educational prospects of his daughter upon his demise and extracted a promise from a son to fund her college education in Manila.

Parenting styles. Only 14 participants gave information on parenting styles. Cecilia grew up with her grandparents. Table 3 presents the parenting styles fathers and mothers used in nurturing the participants.

TABLE 3 Parenting styles of participants' parents

Parenting Style	Father	Mother
	Response <i>n</i> = 14	Response <i>n</i> = 14
Authoritative	7	7
Permissive	5	4
Authoritarian	1	3
Unresponsive	1	0
Total	14	14

The data show that 14 or half of the participants' parents were authoritative, nine were permissive, four were authoritarian, and one was unresponsive.

Authoritative parents took the time to talk to and explain things to their daughters. The girls became well-informed from the variety of topics they discussed. They understood the rules set by their parents and did their best to live by them. It was implicit that rules were given to provide them direction and discipline; curb unwanted behavior like rebellion; and instill desired behavior such as excellence in work, handling money well, honesty, integrity, obedience, proper conduct, punctuality, and taking care of their reputation. Rules, however, did not hinder them from exploring possibilities in a course or career path alien to the family. Parents' response to their children motivated them to give their best in their work and to make their fathers and mothers proud.

Permissive parents were non-conventional and indulgent towards their

daughters. They also allowed substantial self-regulation. Hence, their daughters easily opened up and shared problems with them, and were more easy-going, independent, and willing to take risks. They were allowed to explore their talents and capabilities, and became confident with their decisions.

Parents who were authoritarian were strict disciplinarians. They expected their daughters to get good grades, save for the things they wanted, and to achieve in life. Their daughters accomplished these things. Self-discipline became a part of their lives, and this proved essential in their professions and achievements.

Only one parent was reported as unresponsive. In retrospect this daughter realized that she learned not to be too anxious whenever she did not get what she wanted. She confirmed to having a "live and let live" attitude.

Home environment. Table 4 shows the home environment descriptions in which the participants were nurtured.

TABLE 4 Participants' home environments

Home Environment	Frequency, f
Emphasis on independence	8
Emphasis on interdependence	7
Focus on the child	9
Less focus on the child	6
High level of stress	7
Low to moderate level of stress	8
Members competed against each other	1
Members pulled together	14
High parental warmth	6
Low to moderate parental warmth	9

Distinguished Filipino women were raised in different home atmospheres. An almost equal number of gifted women were raised in homes that *emphasized independence* (8) and *interdependence* (7). More participants grew up in home environments where *parents' focus was on the child* (9) than where there was *less focus on the child* (6). There were almost equal numbers of participants who were nurtured in *home environments of high* (7) and *low to moderate levels of stress* (8). Almost all (14) participants were raised in homes where family *members pulled together* or helped each other. Finally, more participants (9) were nurtured in homes of *low to moderate parental warmth* rather than high parental warmth (6).

Women raised in homes where independence was stressed learned to make their own decisions, rely on their abilities and resources, manage their finances, and take responsibility for their life choices. Patricia and Daniela remembered:

When I was in 2nd year HS, I was aching for a camera ... My parents said, "One, we could not afford it. [Two], if you want it, go get it." How do I get it? "You have a contest. Win it. If you win it, then you will save up the money to buy the camera ...*I-manage mo ang baon mo*. [Manage your allowance.] Buy it yourself!" (Laughs) – Patricia

Sa amin, basta pinasok mo 'yan, decision mo 'yan, ikaw ang bahala dyan. Nung nabuntis ako, [In our family, you had to be responsible for your decisions and their consequences. When I became pregnant,] I paid for my hospitalization. I pay for my daughter's tuition, *pero pinapautang ako ng Nanay ko* [although my mother gives me a loan]. I pay her back diligently, and *may interest kung lumampas ako* [interest is added if I'm late in paying] (Laughs). . . . *Hindi nila kami ni-spoil. "Tutulungan ka namin, pero kailangan tulungan mo*

rin ang sarili mo."[They did not spoil us. "We will help you, but you have to help yourself, too."]– Daniela

Meanwhile, women raised in homes that stressed interdependence learned to be supportive of their siblings, preserve family unity, appreciate and welcome other people's talents and contributions, and be a team player.

Parents of distinguished Filipino women focused on their children's up bringing, learning and development. Thelma's parents, for example, made sure their 10 children studied and performed well at school to qualify for admission to the University of the Philippines and other good learning institutions where tuition was affordable. Lily's father took the time to check her Math assignments every night. Francesca remembered, "I felt sufficient attention. There was a focus on individuality. The influence was more for us to discover who we were and to express that in the life we chose to live."

Those who did not receive as much attention from their parents had more time to pursue their own interests and hobbies. They learned to rely on their internal resources and struggled to help themselves. By doing so, they became independent females.

I learned to be self-contained ... I had to rely on my inner resources for whatever I needed. This was also my attitude with my career because eventually you cannot rely on anyone ... *Binigay na ng Diyos ang lahat nang kailangan mo* [God has already given you everything you need] ... I think if I did not have an independent spirit, I would not be where I am now. – Urduja

Low to moderate levels of stress were conducive to a happy and peaceful childhood. The participants were able to concentrate on their studies, pursue their dreams, think, and be creative.

They had more time to make friends. On the contrary, stressful home environments produced gifted girls who functioned well and flourished even in the midst of pressure and pain. Urduja said:

Pinili ko yung isang career na napakastressful [I chose a very stressful career]! (Laughs) This is (my) level of energy ... I tried a lot of jobs, (but) all these jobs were boring! Maybe there's not enough stress (Laughs)! So eventually I stuck to this career which was very stressful from Day One, and yet I'm still here. I complain and yet I thrive in stress ... It's the lifestyle my body needs *kasi pag wala akong ginagawa parang magpapakamatay na ako dahil sa boredom* ... The minute someone says, "*Gawa tayo ng project, ayan na naman! Hindi na naman (ako) matutulog ng ilang buwan. [because when I am idle I feel like I want to commit suicide out of boredom ... The minute someone says, "Let's work on a project", there I go again! I'll be sleepless for months.]*" I think I absorbed it to the degree that it became the level of my lifestyle.

The participants understood that their actions had corresponding consequences. To cope with the pressure, they developed stress releasing measures. Moreover, they learned to resolve conflicts at work and at home.

Almost all of the participants said they and their siblings pulled together. According to Deborah, growing up in an environment where siblings helped one another taught her to rally people towards a goal in times of crisis. She explained:

When you run a company, you face a lot of crises. Instead of running away, you pull together. You embrace the crisis together with other people.... That's how I was influenced. So you don't run from a crisis or become an ostrich. No, you

stand up there, get the people who are with you, and together you can face the crisis.

One participant initially said she and her siblings competed against each other. However, further inquiry revealed that the "competition" was in terms of striving to be on the same level of performance or achievement, instead of striving to be better or the best in the family. Grace's siblings supported her in her bid for a seat in Congress against a member of a powerful and entrenched political family. She recalled:

Doon ko nakita kung gaano ako kamahal ng mga kapatid ko. Kahit na akala nila ay, "Ano ba itong I uka-lukang kapatid naming sumusuntok sa buwan!", "pati naman sila nakisuntok sa buwan! (Laughs) Pati sila, naki-luka-luka! [That's when I realized the extent of my siblings' love for me. Even if they thought, "Our sister is crazy, aiming for the impossible," they aimed with me for what seemed unachievable. (Laughs) They joined me in my madness!]

Being raised in a home with low to moderate parental warmth had different effects on the women. Although they are friendly individuals, Lita and Grace admitted that they are not demonstrative of their affection to others. Urduja felt insecure growing up. She recalled:

I felt *na siguro* [that maybe] they would love me more if I achieved more. I equated achievement with love ... When I started achieving, it was important to me that (my father) was proud of me. If I had a play, it was important to me that he would watch and say, "*Magaling ka* [You are very good]!"

Daniela became very demonstrative of her affections to her daughter and others. According to Vanessa, growing up in such an environment made her a stronger individual.

I learned to achieve without minding what other people said about me. *May praises o wala* [Whether I receive praises or not], I will do what needs to be done. I will achieve.

Significant Individuals. Data revealed that four of the five most significant individuals in the talent development and achievement of the participants were family members. They were their mothers and fathers, followed by their spouses and children. The fifth were their mentors.

Mothers were the most influential person in the lives of distinguished Filipino women. They were a genetic source of their abilities and the channel through which they acquired spirituality, values, discipline and character. Their mothers were responsible for the initial development of their talents. They were sources and models of support and strength, courage and survival, industry and intellect, and resourcefulness and resilience.

My mother was a quiet person. She was really a homemaker all her life ... Her formal education was only up to grade 4, but in many ways she was self-taught! She was a great cook, a great homemaker! She taught my sister and me all the skills we know ... I remembered that nothing stopped my mother. If the iron wasn't working, an electrician would come over and fix it, and she would watch. Later she would say, "*Alam ko na!*" *The next time sira ulit, alam na niya kung ano ang gagawin.* ["I know it now!" The next time it's broken, she knows what to do.] – Francesca

Through their mothers' examples and gentle pieces of advice, daughters gained better perspective of their lives, capabilities, possibilities, and careers; thereby molding them into the kind of women they could be. Career-oriented mothers were living proofs of what their daughters were to accomplish in the future.

Second in importance were the participants' *fathers*, the other half of the genetic source of their abilities. Fathers imparted wisdom through life lessons they shared. They passed on to their daughters their love for reading and travel and their interests in various subjects. Daughters developed confidence through their fathers' positive reinforcement and respect. Francesca reminisced:

My father was special in that he took the time to tell us all individually how *magaling* [capable] we were ... He would repeatedly tell me (and I never forgot this), "You will be someone special. You're going to be well-known." He kept saying it to me, and at that time I was only 15 or 16. I kept thinking that it was because he loved me very much . . . Years later, when I had achieved a certain amount of respect, I thought, "He was right! He was right!" He knew, he sensed.

Times spent together were used to instill values such as faith in God, patience, honesty, love of country, and social responsibility.

My deep sense of social responsibility was inculcated by my father. *Napakalakas ng* [He had a very strong] sense of social responsibility! My father was a lawyer. I don't know if he ever got paid. He got paid in terms of fruits, chicken, and whatever; but it never deterred him from giving it his best. – Patricia

Their fathers gave them the freedom to pursue their aspirations even though they lay in unfamiliar fields, and were very supportive of their talent development. From them, outstanding Filipina entrepreneurs acquired business acumen and learned sound business relations. High achieving fathers were a source of pride for their daughters, and were role models of the success they aspired for. They were their daughters' friends and mentors, too.

Spouses of distinguished Filipinas were generally a source of emotional, moral, physical, financial and spiritual support in their endeavors and through the struggles and challenges of their journey towards achievement. Roxanne said: “[My husband] gave me a lot of time and space to achieve ... [He] was very unselfish. He allowed me to spread my wings and to bloom further.”

However, not all spouses were dependable or supportive. When husbands were “nonperforming” or unaccommodating of their wives’ aspirations, distinguished Filipino women made life-changing decisions for their children’s sake and their own sanity. They went into business, took classes despite opposition of the spouse, or left a husband who served as an impediment to their personal growth and development.

Even though distinguished Filipino women often experienced a dilemma between their family and career responsibilities, their *children* were inspirations in working towards a legacy of a better Philippines. Adult children became equals in business and sources of fresh perspectives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The journey to achievement is never well-paved and uncomplicated even for gifted Filipino girls. As many doors of opportunity are open to them in a wide range of fields, varied factors may either encumber or boost their talent development and success. Gifted girls’ parents, educators and school administrators play crucial roles.

Parents. Both mother and father need to model talent development and achievement. Their daughters need to see through them that working hard at improving oneself is a natural thing to do if one wants to be very good in her craft or profession. Marginalized parents should not use their lack of higher education as an excuse for their helplessness and inadequacy in helping their daughters achieve. Instead, they can encourage their daughters to reach for their aspirations by displaying their own practical intelligence, industry, perseverance, and

resilience; and by instilling in them the value of education.

Parents need to spend more time with their daughters. Filipino fathers oftentimes leave the responsibility of nurturing their children to their wives. However, fathers have much to impart to their daughters, including skills which are traditionally held as “for the boys” and which cannot be taught by mothers. When both parents spend quality time with their daughters, their children get the best of both worlds. Times together are opportunities to transmit their knowledge, skills and values; answer questions, dispel uncertainties, and enlighten issues; and express belief and confidence in their daughters’ abilities and promise. Their daughters become more knowledgeable and wiser in life, and have a greater chance to achieve.

Parents need to provide a home environment conducive to talent development and achievement. This does not mean that the home should be the epitome of a perfect family. It means, though, that parents should take a hard look at how their parenting styles and the atmosphere in their home encourage or stifle their daughters’ gifts and talents, development and creativity. Gifted girls need a home where they are allowed to explore and express their gifts, and talk about their ideas without fear of being ridiculed or silenced. Reasonable rules must be explained and set, and positive Filipino values should be taught and modeled. Gifted girls will benefit from homes which highlight independence and interdependence, and focus on their educational needs and individuality. They should never be completely shielded from stressful situations because these develop resilience and necessary coping skills. Neither should they be smothered with parental love because gifted girls need to learn to function well and make wise decisions with or without the praises of people around them.

It does not mean that children are to be showered with all the art materials, books, and summer workshops their money can buy (although these are all beneficial);

but it means that parents need to observe what their daughters are good at and provide encouragement and praise for what they aim for and accomplish.

Parents from the marginalized sector of Philippine society need support if their gifted daughters are to maximize their potentials. Scholarships for higher learning and talent development from government and non-government organizations will help ensure that poor but gifted girls will not be left by the wayside.

Educators, school administrators and guidance counselors. Although schools prioritize academic success among students, they should also aim to inculcate inner strength, independence, interpersonal skills, creativity, and resilience among female students. They can provide various interesting and highly motivating informal and formal learning activities through which these can be learned and honed. Creative and fun instructional approaches that require students to think outside of the usual and come up with novel ideas and output must be used, instead of traditional approaches which are often perceived by the gifted and creative as mediocre, boring and discouraging. For instance, teachers can help the students identify their Multiple Intelligences (Gardner 1983), provide activities that draw on the different learning styles and interests, and allow students to express what they have understood in various ways. More depth may be added to content. Teachers must ask *why?* to make students think of cause-and effect relationships; *how?* to let them synthesize what they know and come up with solutions to problems; and *which?* to give them opportunities to make intelligent decisions based on gathered evidence.

In cases where family factors contribute to underachievement, teachers and guidance counselors must be available to provide the listening ear and emotional and motivational support which gifted, creative and talented girls need. Piirto (1995) explained that when the "sun of the home" dims for the child, the "sun of school" must shine even brighter. Parents and the school

must have a positive working relationship in helping gifted, creative and talented girls. Talks on characteristics of giftedness, stress among gifted students, challenges on being gifted and female, and factors which lead to underachievement among female gifted students may be organized for the benefit of students, parents, and the school.

Clubs and organizations which cater to the interests of gifted girls may be created at schools to ensure that their gifts are developed and talents are honed. Experts of interesting fields may be invited to speak about their work and the different possibilities and opportunities for females. Mentoring programs with successful women in their fields of interests may be established.

As girls venture into fields which are alien to their families or economic status, parents may be at a loss because it is truly difficult to advise a child who ventures into an arena parents have never gone before. They need help in guiding pioneering daughters. School administrators and counselors can provide seminars aimed at helping parents understand giftedness and creativity, recognize them in their daughters, know the demands of new fields, believe in their daughters' abilities, and support their development.

Giftedness, creativity and talents are the nation's greatest reserves. The home and the school must work together for the development and achievement of female students if they are to contribute to the progress and actualization of the nation.

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