

To cite this article: Sarah B. Cariño (2025). NARRATIVES OF YOUNGEST CHILDREN ASSUMING THE ROLE OF BREADWINNERS, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 8 (6): 36-106 Article No. 1163, Sub Id 1803

NARRATIVES OF YOUNGEST CHILDREN ASSUMING THE ROLE OF BREADWINNERS

Sarah B. Cariño

Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Graduate School,
G/F M.H. del Pilar Campus, Valencia St. near R. Magsaysay Blvd., Sta. Mesa, Manila, Philippines, 1016

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2025.8603>

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study looks at the real-life experiences of the youngest children in the family who are the breadwinners. This is not what is expected of the "bunso" (youngest) in Filipino households. The study used narrative analysis to collect detailed experiences from those who took on financial responsibilities because their parents were sick, retired, or experiencing significant financial difficulties. Their stories showed personal sacrifice, postponed goals, and emotional isolation, but they also showed strength, emotional maturity, and the ability to find meaning in life. Some of the main themes are internal conflict, balancing duty and self, and changing cultural norms. Instead of giving in to becoming a victim, these people saw their problems as acts of love with a purpose. They didn't just take on their jobs because they had to; they did it because they wanted to protect and build up their families. In the end, the study sheds light on the work that these quiet providers do that isn't often visible. It also adds to conversations about family dynamics, young agency, and cultural norms in the Philippines.

KEYWORDS: Youngest Child, Breadwinner, Filipino Family, Cultural Expectations

1. The Problem and Its Setting

This study explores the transition within family dynamics because these changes have led to the youngest children assuming the role of breadwinners. It will discuss the various factors that contribute to this shift, as well as outline the problems and challenges that these youngest children experienced as breadwinners during this transition. The chapter seeks to provide a clear understanding that the family structure is now evolving with its involving complexities.

The primary or sole provider of income in a household is known informally as the "breadwinner." They are usually the ones who make up the most of the household income and are generally responsible for the majority of the expenses linked with maintenance and family support. To meet the family's financial needs, they are the family member who makes the most money (Treves-Kagan, 2022).

In the Philippines, the eldest child has always been seen as the breadwinner in the family. This

expectation comes from long-standing family conventions that say the “panganay” is like a second parent—responsible, dependable, and naturally expected to take on financial duties. These kinds of ideas are often unspoken but very strongly held, due to family dynamics and stories that are told in society as a whole (Cruz, 2022). This study, on the other hand, looks at the youngest children who have unexpectedly become the family's breadwinner instead of following the usual path, which is commonly determined by societal expectations. This choice is not meant to ignore the hardship that the eldest child usually has to bear. Instead, it is intended to point out a growing but uncommon fact: that family roles are becoming more flexible. Because of illness, poverty, and other societal issues (Alkhalil, 2024), this study challenges the hierarchical nature of birth-order responsibilities by focusing on the lived experiences of the youngest children as breadwinners. It wants to help people understand familial resilience in a way that includes everyone.

It wants to show that age or birth order do not always determine strength, maturity, and responsibility; instead, they are defined by necessity, love, and a strong feeling of commitment to one's family.

Recent reports and real-life stories show that the youngest children are taking up an increasingly significant portion of the breadwinner role. The narrative of Mitch Barrios, a 24- year-old bunso from Cavite, in an article on One PH called "A Breadwinner at 19: What It's Like to Be Young and Your Family's Sole Provider" (Cardona, 2021) makes a strong point. When Mitch was 19, her father had a stroke, and her mother came back from working abroad, leaving her as the only person who could provide for the family. She had to juggle multiple jobs to keep her family afloat without warning. Mitch's story shows how this duty affected her mental health, her own goals, and her relationships, as well as the emotional and physical toll it took on her.

According to Casipong et al. (2022), less perceived social support is highly associated with lower well-being among breadwinners. This is especially true for individuals who take on the position suddenly or out of necessity. Online testimony, like that found on sites like Reddit (2023), supports these findings. The youngest siblings say they are emotionally drained, have given up on their aspirations, and feel like they are "human ATMs."

Furthermore, studies have indicated that young Filipino people who become the primary breadwinners, no matter what order they were born in, often have trouble with mental and physical tiredness. Abrea and Vargas (2025) said that many young adult workers in the Philippines go through "parentification," which means they have to take on adult responsibilities before they are entirely emotionally or financially equipped. Youngest children have a harder time with this since they don't have the same level of confidence or social skills that eldest siblings usually do. Aldrin and Sacristan (2020) also discovered that young breadwinners are more prone to putting off their own goals and education, which can lead to cycles of burnout and neglecting themselves. These results are similar to what the youngest children go through when they have to put their own needs aside to help their families.

Not having emotional support or assistance from society makes their experiences even worse (Villano, 2024). The problems that eldest children as breadwinners face have been well documented in books and the news, but the stories of bunso providers are not often told. ChildHope Philippines (2023) said that in multigenerational Filipino homes, many of the youngest children are required to stay happy and positive, even when they have hidden problems. This assumption that people will be emotionally intense, along with the pressure of money, causes an internal conflict that people often keep to themselves. People applaud the youngest child for being masayahin or masunurin, yet they may be dealing with money problems, despair, and confusion about their identity (Erron 2023). These findings and stories together give a clear picture of how the youngest breadwinners, who are least likely to lead, typically have to deal with the most responsibility while still being expected to be the most protected.

There is a gap in the research that overlooks the unheard stories of the youngest breadwinners. This leaves a big hole in our understanding of how families work and how breadwinning responsibilities affect the youngest members of Filipino households. Most studies conducted to date focus on the "panganay," or eldest child, and discuss the challenges they face regarding sacrifice, familial obligations, and pressure. These narratives are beneficial; nevertheless, they generally neglect to address the distinct obstacles faced by the youngest children when they assume the role of primary provider.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As a result of the growing tendency in society where the youngest children are becoming the primary breadwinners in their families, the research problem examines the many issues and effects that come with this unusual family dynamic. The goal of this study is to find an answer to the grand research question stated below.

How do the youngest children make sense of their experiences as they assume the role of breadwinners?

1.2 Thesis Argument

The study and its results will reveal the journey of the youngest children assuming the breadwinning role through the lived experiences of the participants.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Family Systems Theory, which Murray Bowen created, is the basis for this study. It is a fundamental theory for understanding how families work. The theory sees the family as an emotional system in which each member has a distinct job that helps the family unit work as a whole. The central assumption behind this thesis is that people can't be understood on their own, but only in terms of how they interact with their family. The system is constantly changing, and when there is a problem or stressor, roles and duties change to maintain balance.

This hypothesis helps us understand why the youngest children sometimes act like parents or older siblings, especially when they are under a lot of stress, whether it be financial or emotional. Family Systems Theory lets us look at family dynamics to see how and why the youngest children in a household might take on the job of breadwinner.

Family Systems Theory says that families deal with stress by changing roles to maintain stability. Role flexibility occurs when the youngest child becomes the breadwinner. In the past, the youngest child was not expected to take on these kinds of obligations. However, when the family is under stress, the system changes and puts the duty on whoever is available or able, which can include the youngest child. This adaptive process shows that the theory's prediction that family roles are not set in stone but change as needed is correct. The theory also shows how family expectations and sibling relationships change when there is a crisis. If older siblings are not available or do not want to be, the youngest child may feel that they have to take on the job of breadwinner. This change in who is responsible can make things confusing for the youngest child or raise their expectations. Family Systems Theory says that this is an adaptive response, where everyone in the family makes changes to keep things running smoothly. This supports the idea that the youngest child is the breadwinner.

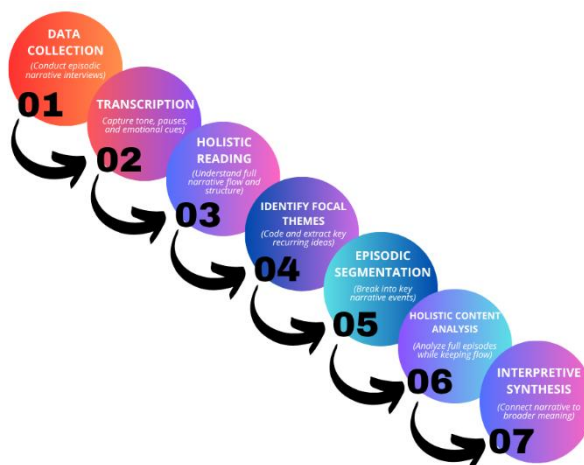


Figure 1: Diagram of Murray's Narrative Analysis

This research paper employed Murray's (2003) narrative analysis, which is a set of processes that are both structured and flexible for making sense of qualitative data from life stories or episodic narratives. Narrative inquiry can be utilized as both a theoretical and methodological framework. It helps researchers figure out how to structure their analysis of tales and which methodologies work best for this approach (Book et al., 2024; Smith & Sparkes, 2009). For instance, Cudworth (2014) utilized Murray's analysis in her research, *Making Sense of Breast Cancer*, which examined how women narratively repair their identities after receiving a life-altering diagnosis. Similarly, this research

centers on profoundly personal narratives, notably the experiences of the youngest children who assumed the role of breadwinners for their families, rendering Murray's model particularly relevant. The first step in the procedure is to gather information through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. In this case, the researcher asked the participants to talk about specific events or turning points in their lives that are connected to the research issue, such as when they became the primary breadwinner. Second, the interviews were encoded, paying attention to not only what was said but also to emotional cues, pauses, and stresses, which might change the meaning. Third, the researcher reads each story as a whole to get a sense of its tone, structure, and emotional depth without breaking it up into categories too soon.

Fourth, the researcher finds the main themes in the story. These are ideas, metaphors, emotional changes, or keywords that show what is most important to the narrator. Fifth, the facts are put into episodic units, or small narrative parts, and each one is looked at in light of the main themes to see how meaning is made through turning points, causal relationships, or moral reflections. Sixth, the holistic-content approach is used to keep the narrative's sequence, emotional resonance, and coherence so that it can emerge in its natural way. Finally, the researcher puts all of these ideas together into a coherent case narrative that links the participant's real-life experience to bigger ideas and social structures like identity, role expectations, or cultural standards.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There were only a few key characteristics in this study, which were: (1) The participants were aged 20 to 35, encompassing the transition from early adulthood to full adulthood. (2) They were required to possess a bachelor's degree. (3) They must have a minimum of one year of professional experience to gain a more precise comprehension of adult responsibilities. (4) They were required to be the primary provider. (5) They must be the youngest child with at least one sibling.

The study only focuses on Davao del Norte, Philippines, and on the experiences of the youngest children who are responsible for making money in this area. This means that the results cannot be used to make generalizations about other contexts. In other places or cultures, the youngest children who are breadwinners may have different experiences and problems. Despite these limitations, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that can educate local initiatives and shed light on the experiences of the youngest breadwinners in the Philippines.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is that it could help various stakeholders involved in supporting and advocating for the well-being of the youngest breadwinners.

This study gives other breadwinners a sense of community and strength by showing them that they are not alone in their struggles and that they may have similar experiences with other young people who

are also breadwinners. Families and communities may help the youngest breadwinners in a meaningful way by creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere that promotes their health and success. Mental health providers can also better help the youngest breadwinners by learning about their stories and the unique stressors and mental health issues they may be dealing with. This paper can also help employers and workforce development professionals create supportive programs and resources that are more suitable for these individuals. Moreover, the results of this study can help shape policies and programs that meet the specific needs of the youngest children as breadwinners. This study is directly related to SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Lastly, future researchers in relevant domains can use the results of this study to learn more about the experiences and consequences of the youngest breadwinners.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Presented are related studies and literature about the subject at hand. This chapter provides a diverse range of ideas, forces, and factors into a coherent complex of literature about the topic. These come from a variety of printed sources, including newspapers, books, journals, biographies, government documents, institutional reports, and the internet.

2.1 Youngest Breadwinner in the Philippines

In the Filipino family, roles are usually based on age and gender (Camella, 2023). The family is a collectivist organization with a hierarchy and pakikipagkapwa. The panganay, or oldest child, is expected to take on the most responsibilities, especially when the family is experiencing financial difficulties (Alampay, 2024). Many people think of this as a way to pay off a debt of appreciation (utang na loob) and a debt of shame (hiya), which are essential principles in Filipino parenting and connections between generations (Dela Peña, 2024). Because of this, the youngest child, or bunso, is often seen as the most safeguarded and least burdened (Grisbrave, 2024). They are supposed to receive care rather than offer it. This idea has changed the way people think about who should help the family, even when the situation says otherwise.

Recent research, on the other hand, shows that bunso children, especially young adults, are increasingly likely to become the breadwinners, especially when traditional family structures break down. When illness, moving abroad, or a sibling's absence affects a family, the youngest children often have to step up and take care of things (Francisco, 2022). These position reversals go against the usual hierarchy, yet they are rarely talked about or studied in academic writing. Cardona (2021) discovered that the youngest breadwinners in a family are generally ignored, even if they have the same, if not more, emotional and financial burdens. They say they feel invisible, unprepared, and unsupported because they took on a role that wasn't designed for them culturally, but they had to because of love and circumstance.

This study tries to fill in a cultural gap. It questions the idea that birth order should determine who is responsible by looking at the real lives of bunso breadwinners. Instead, it says that an individual's

ability to sacrifice, grow up, and be strong is not limited by family designations but by their love and loyalty to their family (Suliva, 2020). This argument aligns with emerging calls in Filipino psychology to question oppressive cultural norms in favor of more inclusive, empowering narratives.

2.2 Challenges of Youngest Breadwinners

Youngest children who become breadwinners often assume the role when a parent dies, older siblings leave, or the family suddenly has financial problems. Unlike eldest breadwinners who may have slowly grown into their role, bunso breadwinners usually have to make sudden changes with little time to prepare or get help (Teng, 2021). This rapid change not only messes up their developmental goals as young adults, but it also puts them in emotionally and socially confusing situations. Many people say they feel alone, conflicted, and unsure of their place in the family as their position changes from being cared for to becoming the leading provider (Robles, 2024).

Youngest breadwinners sometimes have to make personal sacrifices to satisfy the family's financial demands, like putting off going to college, giving up on their career goals, or working many unstable jobs. Khan and Ahmed (2021) observed that during the epidemic, some bunso had to quit going to school to help their families earn a living, even though they weren't officially recognized as "head of the household." These individuals often have to deal with a lot of heavy duties without saying anything, and they do it out of love and the need to protect their loved ones. Their sacrifices are frequently unrecognized because they contradict the cultural script that labels the youngest as the least accountable (Schorr and Goldner, 2023).

Youngest child breadwinners often feel a lot of stress and anxiety because of the expectations and demands of their families. As the world changes, the economy grows, and technology improves, the youngest children sometimes have to take on the job of being the provider (Eleven Media Group Co., 2019). This change brings with it huge problems, making these individuals give up their own lives and goals to help their family make ends meet. A lot of the youngest children have to stop going to school and get a job instead, which keeps them stuck in a cycle of limited possibilities and lower prospects (Bragado et al., 2021).

Many studies show that being the breadwinner is bad for the mental health of young adults. Thern et al. (2023) discovered that people who had unstable jobs in their early twenties were more likely to have mental health difficulties later in life. Salcedo (2024) also talks about how being the youngest child earner can affect your mental health and make you emotionally drained. This is because you are always worried about meeting your financial duties and feel pressure to support your loved ones. Also, neglecting your health because you're always balancing job and money problems can lead to health problems and a general deterioration of well-being.

Youngest breadwinners typically have to take on adult responsibilities earlier than they thought they would, not because it's the right thing to do, but because they have to. As they take on tasks that are very different from what society expects of young adults, they feel a tremendous sense of sacrifice (Turiano, 2022). Many people put off their schooling, put off their own goals, or start working multiple jobs too soon to support their families' immediate needs. As a result, they have to grow up quickly and learn how to do tasks that are usually the responsibility of elder family members (Bryant, 2021).

These youngest siblings typically have to take on a lot of financial responsibility at a young age, like paying for their family's basic needs, schooling, and other essential expenses (Francisco, 2022). Online groups like r/BunsoSupportGroup (2022) also show how common these kinds of demands are. Conduct discussions about the challenges that the youngest siblings, as breadwinners, endure.

The fact that the youngest children are now the breadwinners is a sign of larger worldwide trends and shows how hard these obligations can be on people's mental and emotional health. Research from the Philippines, India, Brazil, and the UK has shown that family and cultural factors often force young children to take on these major adult tasks too soon. These individuals typically feel quite anxious and stressed out because they have to balance school, work, and paying bills (International Labour Organization, 2019).

2.3 Factors Influencing Youngest Children as Breadwinners

Many studies have shown that the youngest children, especially in collectivist countries like the Philippines, often take on family roles. Lim and Rañola (2022) say that Filipino families usually stress utang na loob (debt of gratitude) and pakikisama (social harmony). This makes children feel like they have to help their parents and household as soon as they can, especially when their parents retire or lose their jobs. Hasselhorn et al. (2022) also talked about how economic changes, like a parent's retirement or health problems, might lead to a restructuring of responsibilities within the family in The Filipino Family. The youngest child, especially if they are single and live with their parents, is typically the most logical and available person to take on the burden, even if they aren't emotionally or financially ready to do so. Denden (2024) also talked about how intergenerational commitments in the Philippines are based on cultural norms that often force the youngest children to help pay for the family, even if it means giving up their own goals in life or work.

Sometimes, the family's financial problems forced the youngest children to become the breadwinners. Many studies have shown how being poor can affect how people see themselves as breadwinners in different cultures and societies. Abrea and Vargas (2025) say that when families are under financial stress, the youngest children sometimes have to take on adult roles too soon, such as managing finances. This is especially true in collectivist societies like the Philippines. This behavior, called early role assumption, is especially typical in families that have to deal with rapid changes in their financial situation.

Ebasan's (2025) research on Filipino individuals discovered that when families have money problems,

the youngest member, if they are the most capable, often becomes the breadwinner. This is not because of birth order, but because of talent and need. A 2021 study by the Philippine Statistics Authority on family dynamics in low-income households in the Philippines also found that when parents lack financial stability or their jobs are unpredictable, their children are far more likely to work. In these situations, the youngest children become the providers to help keep the household stable.

Another aspect is the lack of other family members to help. Stabler's (2024) study shows that when older siblings fall behind in school, it can indirectly put more financial strain on the youngest child in the family, especially when money is needed right away. If elder siblings can't do their part, the youngest children may have to step in and do it.

2.4 Psychosocial Effects on Youngest Breadwinners

Schorr and Goldner's (2023) study talks about the subject of personal sacrifice. It says that these youngest children who take on adult responsibilities too soon, including becoming the family breadwinner, often go through something called "parentification." This change in roles makes individuals give up many aspects of their lives that are important to them, especially when it comes to education and personal growth. Kaijadoo et al. (2024) also observed that the youngest breadwinners in families who are having trouble making ends meet commonly drop out of school and take on full-time jobs, which can cause stress, frustration, and a loss of personal identity. Even while these sacrifices are honorable, they put the person at a developmental disadvantage compared to peers who don't face this kind of strain.

Studies have regularly demonstrated that the youngest breadwinners often have more mental health problems since they have to take on a lot of duties at a young age. Ryu and Fan (2022) say that financial problems might make family providers more stressed and anxious, especially when they are young and still growing emotionally. Gee (2020) also found that young people who care for others may feel alone and emotionally suppressed since their own needs are put on hold for the good of the family.

There is a lot of evidence that too much work might hurt the physical health of the youngest breadwinners. Bushell's study from 2022 found that the youngest children who are in charge of their families' finances are more likely to have health problems connected to stress, lack of sleep, and poor nutrition due to their erratic schedules and insufficient time. Sato, Kuroda, and Owan (2020) also say that working long hours without taking breaks greatly raises the risk of burnout, heart difficulties, and stomach problems, especially for people who can't afford to see a doctor or take time off. Dariotis et al. (2023) also found that the physical impacts are worse for Filipino youngest breadwinners who take on adult tasks too soon because of the cultural expectation that they put family necessities ahead of their well-being. Many studies show that financial responsibilities can make the youngest breadwinners give up or put off their personal and professional goals. Barnes (2022) says that people in low-income areas typically change their career plans to focus on jobs that will make them money right away instead of long-term aspirations because they have to take care of their families.

It is well known that taking on adult tasks at a young age can lead to social isolation for the youngest breadwinners. Salcedo (2024) says that children who have to deal with money problems typically avoid spending time with their friends because they are stressed and don't have enough time. This can make them feel alone. The study by Botha, Deady, and Bower (2024) also found that when these people are having financial problems, they are less likely to interact with others, which can make them feel lonely and disconnected from others. Research repeatedly indicates that the youngest children who are the breadwinners typically give up their career goals because of money problems. Gallardo-Vazquez et al. (2024) say that being financially responsible at a young age sometimes gets in the way of education and career paths, making people take jobs that aren't as good or put off going back to school. Wray-Lake et al. (2017) say that young children who have to help their families with money frequently put short-term income ahead of long-term professional objectives. This can have an impact on their mental health and ability to move up the social ladder.

Lazzara (2020) says that these youngest children who are becoming adults often have to deal with identity issues, instability, and self-focus. This study is similar to others that have looked at how external duties, including adult-like burdens, affect the mental health of teens and young adults, possibly making symptoms like anxiety and sadness worse. Also, qualitative research indicated that the youngest children who are breadwinners become more emotionally mature, but they also become more socially withdrawn and emotionally tired (Delao et al., 2023).

2.5 Navigating Breadwinning Responsibilities as the Youngest Child

Spirituality has become a significant source of strength for people who are going through tough times in their lives, especially those who lack material or emotional support. Ferreira-Valente et al. (2020) say that religious and spiritual beliefs help people cope with their pain and provide them with a reason to keep going. Elorza (2019) says that in the Philippines, Filipino teenagers from low-income households, even the children, often turn to their faith to help them deal with the stress of having to take on responsibilities at a young age.

Furthermore, studies repeatedly show that regular exercise is good for controlling stress and improving general health, especially for people who have a lot of responsibilities. Guerriero et al. (2025) say that exercise can help lessen the physical effects of stress by generating endorphins, which help keep your mood stable and regulate your emotions. For very young children who are the primary breadwinners, keeping their emotions in check is essential since they often have to balance school, employment, and family responsibilities that are too much for them to handle at their age.

Scientific Reports (2025) also says that exercise makes you more resilient to stress and improves cognitive function. This is especially important for young breadwinners who have to make decisions and deal with adult responsibilities at a young age. These mental and emotional benefits help people do their challenging jobs better. Regular exercise is good for your mental health and also enables you to get stronger and last longer, which are essential for the youngest breadwinners.

Family members' support and understanding can be pretty crucial for the youngest children who are now the breadwinners. Sashasamara (2024) says that spending quality time with loved ones also helps with emotional stability, lowers anxiety, and makes people more resilient. For the youngest children who are the breadwinners, these times of connection are significant for dealing with the stress of supporting the family. They help them keep their emotional health and sense of purpose in their complex tasks.

Blasi et al. (2019) also looked at how online games can help people deal with stress and discovered that they are suitable for managing emotions and encouraging social interaction. For the youngest children who have to be the breadwinners—often with a lot of time, emotional, and physical stress—online games give them a short but meaningful break. Gaming can help these young people maintain their mental health while dealing with family responsibilities by giving them a place to relax and find emotional balance when other types of social engagement or self-care are hard to come by. In collectivist societies like the Philippines, asking for help from social networks, such as family and close friends, is a wellknown way to deal with problems.

Enriquez (1992) brought the idea of kapwa (shared identity) into Filipino culture. This idea makes asking for aid not a sign of weakness, but a sign of pakikipagkapwa-tao, which means a profound sense of fellowship and caring for others. This cultural lens makes it okay for the youngest breadwinners to lean on other people, especially family members, and it makes them feel better. A recent study by Emory University (2023) supports this finding by saying that younger family members who are responsible for money typically turn to their extended family for help in times of need.

Takiguchi et al. (2022) also talk about how vital leisure and relaxation activities are for people who are stressed. Khajeali et al. (2021) observed that those who manage their time well are less stressed and more productive, especially when they have a lot of work to do. For the youngest children who are the breadwinners, being able to manage their time well is very important for combining employment, school, and family responsibilities.

2.6 Synthesis of the Reviewed Literature and Studies

In the Philippines, these children are usually considered as dependents rather than providers. There is not enough in-depth narrative evidence in the current research that shows the emotional, cultural, and developmental aspects of being a "bunso" who becomes the breadwinner. This study fills that gap by using a narrative technique that puts the voices of these people at the center, showing their lived experiences in a deep and caring way.

This study uses vivid stories to show not just what the youngest breadwinners do, but also how they understand their jobs, deal with sacrifices, and build new identities. It challenges cultural norms and brings to light an experience that is often overlooked, adding a highly human and contextually

grounded view to the conversation about family roles and resilience of the youngest children in the Philippines. It used to be that the oldest or adult males were in charge of providing for the family. Now, however, the youngest children are taking on the job of breadwinners. In collectivist societies like the Philippines, long-standing values like utang na loob (debt of gratitude) and pakikisama (social harmony) make children help their family as soon as they can, especially when times are tough or their parents are retiring (Lim & Rañola, 2022).

Hasselhorn et al. (2022) also say that the youngest people often have to take on new roles, especially if they are single and still live with their parents. Denden (2024) says that intergenerational commitments, which are very important in Filipino society, often make children prioritize family demands over their own goals, even if they aren't ready.

Youngest breadwinners often use a variety of coping strategies to deal with the psychological and emotional stress that comes with becoming responsible at a young age. Chimeri et al. (2019) and Sashasamara (2024) show how emotional support from family members can help people deal with stress and stay mentally healthy. In Filipino culture, Enriquez's (1992) idea of kapwa encourages this behavior by presenting asking for aid as a culturally acceptable and emotionally safe way to deal with problems.

FerreiraValente et al. (2020) say that spiritual beliefs help people cope with their pain and give them the strength to keep going. Elorza (2019) and Söylev et al. (2025) found that Filipino teens and young adults commonly pray and engage in religious practices to deal with their feelings and find hope, especially as they are learning how to be adults. These activities give the youngest breadwinners not only solace but also a way to make sense of their struggles.

Khajeali et al. (2021) and Shepherd (2023) both say that good time management can help lower stress and stop emotional burnout. Terzi et al. (2024) also say that young adults who manage their time well tend to do better in school and at work, even when they're under a lot of stress. The Family Stress Model by Childs Heyl (2022) reveals that people who use proactive financial techniques, such as budgeting and saving, are less stressed about money.

To keep their mental and emotional health in check, the youngest breadwinners also use leisure activities as a way to cope. Takiguchi et al. (2022) talk about how relaxation and recreation can help defend against stress. For the youngest breadwinners who don't have many chances to socialize in the usual ways, these kinds of activities are crucial ways to recharge and stay strong. The literature paints a complicated picture of the youngest child's journey as a breadwinner when you put it all together.

Even though this role reversal goes against what is usually expected, the youngest breadwinners are very adaptable. They can get through, adapt, and lead, often in silence but with great strength, thanks to their spiritual strength, emotional support systems, strategic time and money management, and easy-

to-reach kinds of leisure.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter is devoted to the discussion of the research methodology. Notably, the researcher discussed the research design, the tradition of inquiry, the data-generation method, sources of data, instrumentation, and finally, ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This qualitative study employed a narrative study method to delve into the lives of the youngest children who were the primary breadwinners in their families. Qualitative research helped people feel more comfortable sharing their stories, making their voices heard, and reducing the power gaps that generally exist between them and the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The choice of a narrative method was based on how well it could illustrate the depth and complexity of each story. This method employed in-depth interviews and personal experiences to learn about the different paths, issues, and reasons that shaped the lives of the youngest breadwinners. Narrative inquiry was different from other qualitative methods because it allowed people to share their stories in a way that was truthful to what they had been through (Ntinda, 2019). The study's purpose was to investigate the aspects of family, social, and personal factors that formed the roles and identities of these youngest children as breadwinners as they took on financial responsibilities in their homes.

3.2 Tradition of Inquiry and Data-Generation Method

The study used interviews to collect data. The researcher made consent forms that the participants read and signed before the interviews. Personal visits helped build rapport, which was necessary to get honest and thorough answers. Direct connection-built trust, which made participants more willing to share their experiences and improved the quality of the data. Studies have shown that creating rapport with participants makes them more interested and makes the data more accurate, which leads to more dependable results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The interviews were conducted through video conferencing platforms and face-to-face. Creswell (2003) said that qualitative interviews usually have a few open-ended and unstructured questions that are meant to elicit participants' thoughts and opinions. This study used an interview technique or guide to make sure that the conversation went well and made sense. Creswell (2003) said that using a guide helped make the data collection process more consistent and thorough.

The researchers used thematic analysis to find and explain patterns and themes that emerged repeatedly in the data after they had gathered it. A common way to look at qualitative data is through thematic analysis, which involves methodically coding the notes from interviews and observations. The analysis was done in steps to make sure that the themes were based on what the participants said and that new ideas were fully explored. Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that theme analysis is a strong and adaptable method that can give us rich, thorough, and relevant interpretations of qualitative data.

3.3 Sources of Data

This study used a purposive sample method, which means that the researcher selects participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. This method of sampling worked well for getting a specific group of people quickly, especially when sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern (Crossman, 2020). Community groups and schools helped find possible volunteers, told them about the study, and asked them to take part. This strategy made sure that the sample included the youngest breadwinners in their families.

This study has six (6) people who participated. All of the people who took part satisfied the following requirements: they were the youngest in their family, at least twenty (20) years old, single, childless, had been working for at least a year, had a degree, and were currently living with their parents. Creswell (2015) suggested one or two people for narrative studies, but the researcher chose six to get a broader range of views on the same event.

The people who responded were from the Philippines because people from this nation had a unique mix of cultural, social, economic, and educational backgrounds that made them fit for the study. The mix of traditional Filipino customs and modern influences in Filipino communities gave us a rich setting to look at the complicated social and family dynamics of the youngest breadwinners.

Before the interviews, the participants were given extensive information about the study and paperwork to sign, confirming their understanding of the process. The researcher made it clear that their answers would be kept private and that they might leave the study at any time. The researcher also said that some participants might need help understanding some of the questions, and they were told that they could ask for clarification at any time.

3.4 Instrumentation

This study used exploratory research, mostly in-depth interviews and participant observations, to learn about the lives of the youngest children who were the primary breadwinners in single-parent homes. Semi-structured interviews were the main research tool. This kind of interview led to more extended conversations and was more likely to bring forth fresh ideas and insights that could be put into action (Kakilla, 2021).

The interview guide was made to cover essential subjects, including why people want to be the breadwinner, their emotional and mental well-being, their family dynamics, how they deal with stress, and their future aspirations. The researchers wrote down and transcribed the participants' answers exactly as they were given during the interviews. Observational observations were also recorded during the data collection period.

Along with interviews, participant observations, and document analysis were used to cross-check the data and gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. Interviews gave the researchers

a look into people's personal stories and points of view, but observation helped them understand how people act and interact. Researchers employed observation as a systematic way to collect data, using their senses, mostly hearing and seeing, to understand real-world information (Smit & Onwuegbuzie, 2018).

After gathering data, the researchers also did a document analysis, which meant looking through, reviewing, and interpreting important information. This step was necessary to get meaning, build comprehension, and get empirical knowledge from written sources (Creswell, 2013).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

According to what was noted by the researchers, they conducted this investigation according to ethical standards (Boyatzis, 1998; Mack et al, 2005). The principles of ethical research that a researcher should adhere to are as follows: respect for others, goodness, justice, consent, and confidentiality.

Throughout the study, the researchers made sure that all ethical guidelines were followed. Participants were given a schedule that worked for them, were treated with dignity and respect, and their answers were used only for research. By protecting each participant's privacy and safety, beneficence was upheld. By making sure that the information gathered was accurate, truthful, and based only on participant responses, justice was upheld. Finally, after participants were fully informed about the study's goals, methods, risks, and rewards—as well as the fact that they could withdraw at any moment without facing any repercussions—informed consent was acquired.

3.6 Data Validation

After the data was analyzed, the results were put together and delivered to the people who took part. They were told to check the results for correctness, data privacy, and completeness. The participants were asked to give feedback or suggestions based on the results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents the data gathered through interviews conducted by the researchers. The data collected during the in-depth interviews were analyzed accordingly, and the sections below are a summary of the narratives and focal themes that have emerged from the interviews.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Participants

Participant	Age	No. of Siblings	Work
Sand	25	2	Government Employee
Niwde	26	3	Virtual Assistant and Social Media Manager
Cedy	22	2	Clerk I
Lao	26	3	Call Center Agent and Part Time Driver
Van	29	3	Virtual Assistant
Ryan	29	4	Virtual Assistant

Table 2: Narratives of Sand Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Emerges as breadwinner after college due to family needs; Middle: Adjusts to role, manages emotional and financial pressure; End: Sees role as calling and source of strength.
Themes & Meaning-Making	Duty vs. Self; Survival as Purpose; Silent strength; Meaning through sacrifice; Hope through structure and reflection.
Tone & Voice	Reflective, grounded, philosophical, emotionally articulate. Balanced realism and idealism.
Identity Construction	"I am the youngest but the most capable" — Reinventing bunso identity into that of the provider. Finds empowerment in being relied upon.
Agency & Motivation	Motivated by dreams for the family's comfort and peace. Exhibits agency by redefining life purpose around their needs.
Overall Narrative Theme	Redefining the role of the youngest child through resilience, sacrificial love, and purposeful agency in the face of familial and economic pressure.

4.1 Narratives of Resilience, Love, and Purpose Amid Pressure

I heard a story in Sand's calm voice that had layers that were both subtle and strong. It was a story that wasn't noisily stated but was carefully conveyed, full of profound love and a mature sense of duty. Sand is the youngest in his family, yet he doesn't hesitate to take up the role of being the provider. He

may be the youngest by birth order, but he is the anchor in heart and action.

Sand's choice to start making money was not made quickly or out of fear. It grew slowly, sculpted by familial circumstances and love that doesn't wait to be asked. "Ako ang pinakabata, pero ako ang nabilin" (I am the youngest, but I'm the one who remained), he said plainly, as if explaining something as natural as breathing. His sister was still not able to finish her studies. All that was left was for him to step in, not because he had to, but because it was his profound personal duty. "Gusto nako nga matabangan ang akong mama" (I want to be able to help my mother), he shared, with a tone that was both hopeful and serious. There was no sign of anger. Just intention.

One thing that stands out about Sand's story is how he uses strategic sacrifice to get through life. He works hard as a government employee, putting in long hours, doing the same things over and over, and getting paid little, but he keeps going, "Kapoy ang trabaho, pero kinahanglan. Dili lang para sa ako kundi para sa tanan." (Work is exhausting, but it's necessary—not just for me, but for everyone.) He knows exactly what he wants to do. He doesn't complain, but he doesn't hide the weight either. He is not being careless when he makes this sacrifice. He saves, makes a budget, and makes plans—not just to stay alive, but to make sure his mother is comfortable in the future. This is where his emotional stability really shows.

Sand is relatively emotionally stable. He finds comfort in peacefully doing things and strength in remembering why he does what he does. There are times when the stress is too much, especially when his friends are having fun with their youth while he works and counts his money because he has to, not because he wants to. But his thoughts show that he is more mature than he is. "Panagsa, maghunahuna ko nga kabatan-on pa unta ko, pero kung dili ako, kinsa pa man?" (Sometimes, I think to myself that I should still be enjoying my youth— but if not me, then who else?), he once pondered during our conversation. This question doesn't show regret; it shows the heart of someone who has chosen purpose over comfort.

Sand doesn't use big words or passionate language, but the way he tells his story is like poetry. He doesn't consider himself a victim of his circumstances; instead, he sees himself as someone who faced them with dignity. Being the bunso is not the only thing that makes him who he is. He has changed what it means. He said: "Bisan ako ang pinakaubos sa edad, ako ang nagsilbing haligi karon." (Even though I'm the youngest, I've become the pillar of the family now.) There is quiet pride in that, and rightly so.

As a researcher, I found in Sand a tale that shows how love can change individuals and give them purpose, even when they are limited. From the outside, his life may seem simple, but the heart of what it means to live for others is to make choices based on more than simply dreams. Sand's dreams aren't big; they're simple, like seeing his mother smile, eating without needing to worry, and sleeping without tension.

Sand's story isn't just about being the breadwinner; it's about doing it with love, willingness, and unshakable determination. Even if his life is quiet, it speaks a loud truth: when love is the goal, sacrifice becomes a way to show strength.

4.2 Narrative Structure

4.2.1 Beginning: Emerges as Breadwinner after College Due to Family Needs

Sand didn't wake up one day and decide to be the breadwinner. It happened naturally after graduation, like a peaceful tide that kept rising. "Ako na lang ang nabilin" (I'm the only one left), he said, not with complaint, but with calm acceptance. His elder sibling wasn't able to finish her studies yet, and all that was left was his mother, who needed help and couldn't handle it all on her own. There was no actual official conversation to pass the torch. "Pagkahuman nako og college, nisulod ko dayon og trabaho. Walay pahulay." (After I graduated from college, I immediately started working. No rest at all). He stepped in. He carried it in a beautiful, subtle way. No loud announcements. Just action.

4.2.2 Middle: Adjusts to Role, Manages Emotional and Financial Pressure

Sand had to deal with both mental and financial stress head-on when he started working. It was hard work for him to be a government worker. "Kapoy usahay, labi na kung walay klarong pahulay. Pero kinahanglan man." (Sometimes it's exhausting, especially when there's no proper rest. But it has to be done.) He had to work long hours and do the same things over and over again, which tested his strength, but what challenged him more was knowing that every peso he made had to be stretched to fulfill all their family's needs.

He had to figure out how to deal with his feelings on his own. There were times when he wondered if he was missing out on youth, rest, or a different existence. "Panagsa, maghunahuna ko nga kabatan-on pa unta ko" (Sometimes, I think to myself that I should still be enjoying my youth, he admitted. But the concept never stayed with him for long. He found his purpose and stuck to it. "Kung dili ako, kinsa pa man?" (If not me, then who else?), that question became his anchor.

He learnt how to keep his balance with almost everything. He did what he could and found calm in his daily routine. He didn't want to run away; he just wanted to make things work.

4.2.3 End: Sees Role as Calling and Source of Strength

As time went on, Sand started to see his job as more than simply a burden. He didn't have to do it; he chose to do it. "Ako ang pinakaubos sa edad, pero ako ang nagsilbing haligi karon." (I am the youngest, but now I serve as the pillar of the family). His voice, calm and firm, showed not only acceptance but also power. He talked about his place in the family with pride, saying that he wasn't someone to be pitied but someone to be relied on. And that was enough for him.

He doesn't make the battle sound romantic, but he has found purpose in it. His love for his family keeps

him going even when things are hard. His sacrifices aren't loud, but they happen all the time, which gives him power. Sand no longer thinks of being the breadwinner as a duty; it's now part of who he is. A quiet warrior. A steady source. The youngest child who chose love over comfort.

4.3 Themes and Meaning Making

4.3.1 Duty vs. Self

Every morning, Sand wakes up knowing that he is not just the youngest in the family, but also the one who has to do what others can't. "Every day, I wake up not just as the youngest in our pamilya—but as someone nga kabalo nga duna koy dakong gisaligan" (Every day, I wake up not just as the youngest in our family—but as someone who knows that a great responsibility has been entrusted to me). He doesn't live as he did when he was young. He lives by the rhythm of responsibility, where every peso counts and every desire is weighed against the family's needs.

He may have chosen job offers that would have helped him flourish. He put off going to graduate school. He didn't go to social events. Not because he didn't want them, but because he had to choose. Every time he says yes to a family need, he has to say no to something else.

"Sa una, magpalit ko og ice cream kung ganahan ko. Karon, tan-aw lang. Kay kinahanglan og disiplina. Wala ko magreklamo. Kay kabalo ko, this is my path for now" (Before, I used to buy ice cream whenever I wanted. Now, I look at it—because discipline is necessary. I'm not complaining. I know this is my path for now.)

Every day, he fights the conflict between duty and self. But he has decided not to fight it. He accepted it, even as the weight sought to darken his brightness.

4.3.2 Survival as Purpose

Sand doesn't simply work to get ahead; he works to stay alive. Each payment paid and each shopping item noted is not just a financial transaction; it's a symbol of life going on. He and his mother, "magtuloday mi og calculator sa lamesa" (We take turns using the calculator on the table), plan every penny like soldiers planning a battle.

"Managing finances... para nako, dili lang siya task—it's a mental battle. Checklist style. Ug kada item nga ma-check off nako, mura kog nakaginhawa gamay" (Managing finances... for me, it's not just a task—it's a mental battle. It's like a checklist, and every time I tick off an item, it feels like I can finally breathe, even just a little).

For Sand, survival is more than just breathing; it's also about structure, duty, and love. He sees purpose in what others view as routine and sacrifice: "Routine na siya. Repetitive. Pero naa koy sense of purpose. And that alone makes it worth it" (It's become a routine. Repetitive. Pero naa koy sense of purpose—and that alone makes it worth it).

4.3.3 Silent Strength

You won't hear Sand talk about how great he is. He won't even talk about how much pain he's in. But his quietness is intense. It's the kind of strength that doesn't want to be seen yet keeps the house together like a post that holds up the storm without making a sound.

“Dili lalim ang mubarog para sa tanan... pero nisugot gihapon ko. Ang uban magduha-duha pa, pero ako, niangkon ko sa papel. Dili man ko financial expert, pero kabalo ko nga matag desisyon nako nga paliton o dili paliton, duna siyay epekto sa among tibuok semana.” (It's not easy to stand up for everyone... but I still said yes. Others may hesitate, but I embraced the role. I may not be a financial expert, but I know that every decision I make—whether to buy or not—has an impact on our entire week).

He doesn't grumble; instead, he protects his tranquility with music, peaceful coffee mornings, and small pleasures like biking or playing volleyball. He stays the anchor even when he doesn't have much energy.

4.3.4 Meaning Through Sacrifice

While others want to hold on to their youth, Sand handed it up as a gift. He pays for the quiet steadiness of his home with missed beach getaways, skipped birthdays, and tears that no one sees.

“Makita nako sa social media nga naglingaw-lingaw sila, unya ako, nagsikaysikay para mabuhay ang pamilya. Yes, I may have lost moments, but I've gained meaning.” (I see them on social media having fun, while I'm here, working hard to keep my family going. Yes, I may have lost moments—but I've gained something more profound, my meaning).

Sand's dreams aren't thrown away; instead, they are rolled up and put next to his parents' medicine bottles, utility bills, and cousins' tuition. He doesn't feel stuck, although he does wonder: “Kanos-a kaha ko makapangandoy para sa akong kaugalingon lang? (“When will I ever get the chance to dream just for myself?”)

Still, the meaning keeps him going. For him being the breadwinner is not a burden, it's a calling.

4.3.5 Hope through Structure and Reflection

For Sand, hope doesn't have to be loud or big in life. It is developed slowly, with Sunday morning routines, notebooks with money plans, and muttered prayers under the stars. His faith keeps him grounded. His time with God turns into a retreat.

“Kung sobra na kaayo ang tanan, mokonektar ko sa Ginoo... Because no matter how hard life gets, I believe God sees me.” (When everything becomes too much, I connect with God... Because no matter how hard life gets, I believe God sees me.)

He makes plans. He makes rules. He guards his time and picks who he can trust. In doing so, he shows that he is much more mature than he is. “Kay kung ikaw mismo wala nag-set og boundaries, ikaw gyud ang mapuno. Ginaremind nako akong kaugalingon nga ako gihapon ni... deserving og kalipay. Someday, I know God will turn all this sacrifice into something beautiful.” (Because if you don't set boundaries, you'll be the one who ends up drained. I always remind myself that I'm still me... someone

who deserves happiness. Someday, I know God will turn all this sacrifice into something beautiful.) Sand's story isn't only about being the youngest child or the one who brings home the most money. It's about being strong when you were supposed to be weak. It's about choosing to be responsible instead of feeling bad about what you did, and finding quiet satisfaction in the sacrifices you make. His story shows us that there is love in even the little things we do, like budgeting, missing out, and getting up again, even when we're tired.

4.4 Tone and Voice

4.4.1 Reflective

You won't hear Sand talk about how great he is. He won't even Sand's story has a calm depth to it, like someone who has been through a lot yet never ceased thinking about it or asking himself why things happened the way they did. His voice is heavy with thought, not anger. When he said, “Panagsa, maghunahuna ko nga kabatan-on pa unta ko. Siguro, naa koy laing ginabuhay, pareha sa akong mga kauban nga nakahuman og skwela nga walay gikabalaakan” (Sometimes, I wonder—I’m still supposed to be young. Maybe I could’ve been doing something else, just like my peers who finished school without heavy burdens on their shoulders.)

He wasn't grumbling; he was thinking about the version of himself that might have been if life had been kinder to him. That one simple sentence says a lot: it shows interest, a little bit of longing, and also acceptance of the life he has chosen. He thinks about his lost youth not only to mourn it, but also to figure out why he had to grow up so quickly.

4.4.2 Grounded

Even though his experiences were profoundly emotional, Sand's story is grounded in the everyday concerns of survival and duty. He doesn't make his story sound better than it is. Instead, he speaks with a calm feeling of duty: “Kung dili ako, kinsa pa man?” (If not me, then who else?)

That simple but strong one-liner is what keeps his whole universe together. It's not a big deal; it's just the truth. He doesn't act like a hero; he turns up because someone has to. His remarks have power because he is grounded. He doesn't talk about his dreams out loud until he knows how heavy they are. He works, he gives, and he remains because he has no other choice.

4.4.3 Philosophical

There is a pondering individual underneath the practical surface of his stories who has learnt to ponder more profound questions about life. There are times when Sand's voice turns philosophical, which can take you off guard. It's not because he employs big words; it's because he talks from a lived paradox. “Dili lalim nga ikaw ang gisaligan pero ikaw pud ang pinakabata. Sa una, murag dili makatarungan, pero karon, murag kabalo nako ngano ako.” (It’s not easy being the one they rely on, especially when you’re the youngest. At first, it felt unfair—but now, I think I understand why it had to be me.)

There is wisdom there, a realization that some roles may not be chosen but are fashioned by factors

we can't perceive. He doesn't say he knows everything, but he likes it when people ask him questions. And from there, the message eventually comes out.

4.4.4 Emotionally Articulate

Sand doesn't make his feelings sound more dramatic; instead, he names them clearly and bravely. He isn't scared to say he's tired: “Kapoy. usahay, labi na kung walay makadungog sa imohang mga kakapoy.” (Sometimes it gets exhausting, especially when no one hears the weight you carry.)

His voice isn't loud, but it is true. He provides words to feelings that many people would rather keep hidden, such as being tired, alone, or even jealous of someone else's life. But even in that space, he doesn't let those feelings take over. He lets them be. He has a rare kind of emotional intelligence that helps him feel strongly and still think clearly.

4.4.5 Balanced Realism and Idealism

Sand recognizes that the world isn't flawless. He sees how unjust it is, feels the pressure of expectations, and lives with the results. But he still has a kind of hope inside him. His realism prohibits him from making his sacrifices sound better than they are, but his idealism helps him dream of a better way to live: “Nakat-on ko nga dili kinahanglan nga dakong butang ang kalipay. Panagsa, kana lang nga nakapahuway ko og gamay, o nakapalit og pagkaon nga akong gusto, mura na og premyo.” (I've learned that happiness doesn't have to be something grand. Sometimes, just getting a bit of rest or buying the food I like feels like a reward.)

It's a lovely balance, it stays grounded in real challenges yet never loses sight of the little things that make life good. He doesn't expect miracles, but he does believe in times of peace. His voice is strong because it combines realism and idealism. It's not naive optimism, but faithful endurance.

4.5 Identity Construction

Sand didn't grow up thinking he would be the family's rock. People usually think that being the bunso, or youngest, means that you will be cared for, protected a little longer, and maybe even spoiled. But life didn't give him that script. Instead of fighting it, Sand changed it. He doesn't deny that he is the older brother. He said, “Ako ang pinakaubos sa edad...” (I am the youngest of all...). But there's a twist in the second part of the sentence that changes everything— “...pero ako ang nagsilbing haligi karon.” (but now, I am the one holding the family together.) Sand takes something that would typically make him seem weak and turns it into his strength, not by making bombastic statements, but by doing the job every day.

He didn't get this identity from someone else; he grew into it. He didn't wait for an older person to step up since he was the youngest. He carried the weight himself. When people ask him how he does it, he gives a simple but effective answer: “Kung dili ako, kinsa pa man?” (If not me, then who else?) This question isn't just about obligation. It shows the calm confidence of someone who has stopped waiting for help and has become the anchor.

You can tell that he went from feeling powerless to feeling empowered in his story. He didn't desire power; he just wanted to be needed. It changed how he thought of himself. "Bisan pinakabata ko, kabalo ko nga akong desisyon importante para sa among pamilya." ("Even though I'm the youngest, I know that my decisions matter for our family.") That sentence says something that many people still don't understand: ability isn't about age; it's about how you respond. And Sand decided to answer. There are still times when the inner child comes out, times when he wishes things were different: "Panagsa, maghunahuna ko nga kabatan-on pa unta ko." ("Sometimes, I think to myself—I should still be enjoying my youth."). There is a want here, but not a regret. He chose this road even though he knows how much it will cost him, which makes his new identity stronger.

Over time, he has changed how he sees himself. He is no longer just "bunso." He is now the guardian, the decision-maker, and the provider. He doesn't hide that he's young; he owns it while taking on duties that are much older than he is. And from that place, a new kind of identity comes to light: one that isn't based on age but on talent, dependability, and love. So when he says, "Ako na lang ang nabilin," ("I'm the only one left"). It doesn't stem from hopelessness. It stems from determination. From someone who, even though he was the youngest, became the strongest, not because he had to, but because he wanted to.

Sand's story isn't just about acceptance; it's also about change. He accepts the bunso identity; instead, he raises it. He doesn't just get by in his job; he grows into it until it becomes a badge of honor instead of a burden.

4.6 Agency and Motivation

4.6.1 Motivated by Dreams for the Family's Comfort and Peace

Sand doesn't talk about his own goals when asked what keeps him going. His desire to see his family live without worry is what drives him, "Akong mama, okay na siya sa balay. Ako lang, trabaho. Naa ra mi." ("My mom's fine at home. It's just me— working. We're just here.") That picture shows happiness: his mother is at home resting while he does the task. It's not a fantasy of wealth, but of stability.

He says, "Ako nalang. Ako nalang tanan. Para dili na siya maghuna-huna." ("It's just me now. I handle everything—so she won't have to worry anymore.") Not only does he want to protect his mother from terrible times, but he also wants to protect her from the idea of hard times. This deep desire for her calm becomes the fantasy he follows every day. His comfort doesn't matter much to him when he thinks about the future, but hers does.

4.6.2 Exhibits Agency by Redefining Life Purpose Around their Needs

It could look like Sand gave up his own goals to help the family at first. But when he says, "Wala koy plano sa kaugalingon. Ambot. Basta kabalo ko nga dapat ko motabang," ("I have no plans for myself.

I don't know... I just know I have to help.”), he hasn't lost his way. He's found clarity by rethinking what it means to live a meaningful life.

He took charge of his life after graduation, not because he knew what to do, but because no one else could do it the way he could. “Wala pa ko plano aning tanan. Pero kabalo ko nga kinahanglan mu-earn, mu-tabang, mu-lihok.” (“I didn't plan for any of this. But I know I have to earn, to help, to move.”) This is agency in action: taking charge of your life even when you don't know what's going to happen.

And even as he admits he cries silently at times, he still ends up saying, “Mubarog gihapon ko, para sa ila.” (I'll still stand firm—for them). He doesn't make decisions out of fear or force; he makes them out of love. Sand made what may have been a burden into a personal quest. His sense of self is now built around “pagpaningkamot para sa pamilya” (“Striving for the family”), not because he has no other choice, but because he selected this route with all his heart and quiet strength.

Table 3: Narratives of Niwde Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Assumes role after mother's retirement, forced by circumstances. Middle: Works dual jobs, sacrifices dreams. End: Accepts burden with love, hopeful for the future.
Themes &	Love over obligation; Responsibility as repayment; Slow
Meaning-Making	progress over comparison; Humor and distraction as survival.
Tone & Voice	Honest, candid, sometimes weary but resilient. Tone shifts between pragmatic and deeply personal.
Identity Construction	“I help not because I must but because I want to” — Embraces role with pride and without resentment.
Agency & Motivation	Moves between realism and faith; adapts work for sustainability.
Overall Narrative Theme	Embracing the breadwinner role as a personal mission rooted in love, navigating life with strategic sacrifice and emotional grounding.

4.7 Narratives of Purpose, Sacrifice, and Emotional Strength

Niwde, the youngest in the family, never thought he would have to be the earner. He just knew he should, even though no one instructed him to. “Wala silay giingon nga ‘ikaw na,’ pero kabalo ko nga ang ilang kasaligan ako” (“They didn’t say, ‘you’re the one now,’ but I knew I was the one they relied on”). He took on this silent position without thinking twice, not because he had to, but because he loved them deeply and quietly. This love was the basis for all of his decisions, helping him get through long days and nights of work and sacrifice.

He has a perfectly planned pattern of work and service every day. He gets up at 3 p.m. to work as a social media manager, and then he works the night shift until dawn. After that, he makes breakfast for his parents, washes clothing, and does other chores around the house before ultimately going to bed. “Mura ba’g kada adlaw, sulod ra sa cycle nga trabaho, tulog, trabaho... pero bisan pa man sa kakapoy, moingon gihapon ko nga nakatabang ko” (“Every day feels like a cycle of work, sleep, work... but even in exhaustion, I still tell myself I was able to help”). He doesn’t need praise to keep going; he gets satisfaction from being valuable and reliable. His love shows in his actions, a love he describes as “walay sukod”—immeasurable.

Niwde knows that giving takes a toll on him, even though it makes him happy. His health has gotten worse, his social life has gotten worse as well, and his own goals have been put on hold. He passed the board exam for the job he wanted, but for the sake of his family, he selected a different profession that pays more. “Dili pa ni mao ang best para sa akong kaugalingon... fulfilled ko nga nakatabang ko, pero incomplete ko as a person” (“This may not be the best for me... I’m fulfilled helping them, but incomplete as a person”). But his heart is still in the right place. A simple “thank you” from his mother and a quiet supper together are two things that remind him of his “why.” “Kana nga pagpasalamat... mao ang akong rason” (“That gratitude—that’s my reason”).

Niwde keeps his emotional balance even though he has a lot of weight on his shoulders by doing modest but essential things for himself. He relaxes by watching sitcoms or playing games, and he lets himself cry. “Kung gusto ko muhilak, muhilak ko. Dili na weakness—outlet na siya” (“If I want to cry, I cry. It’s not weakness—it’s an outlet”). He doesn’t say he’s a hero; he just chooses to love, remain, and serve. “Ang akong journey dili perpekto, pero puno siya og tinuod nga gugma” (“My journey isn’t perfect, but it’s full of genuine love”). For Niwde, being the breadwinner is more than a job; it’s a personal mission based on love, lived with purpose, and supported by grace.

4.8 Narrative Structure

4.8.1 Beginning: Assumes Role After Mother’s Retirement

Niwde didn’t wake up one day and decide to be the breadwinner; it just occurred. It was never officially given to anyone, but life has a way of putting people in charge when they are most needed. When his mother retired and the family still needed money, it was Niwde, who was the youngest, who discreetly took over. “Wala silay giingon nga ‘ikaw na,’ pero kabalo ko nga ang ilang kasaligan ako” (“They

didn't say, 'you're the one now,' but I knew I was the one they relied on"). He didn't take the part; he carried it because love and need pulled him to it.

4.8.2 Middle: Works Dual Jobs, Sacrifices Dreams

His days got longer as his duties got harder. Niwde now has two jobs: one as a social media manager in the afternoon and another as a night shift worker that keeps him up all night. He worked, took short breaks, and did duties around the house repeatedly. After his night shift, he makes breakfast for his folks, washes clothing, cleans, and then goes to sleep. When he wakes up, he does it all over again. "Mura ba'g kada adlaw, sulod ra sa cycle nga trabaho, tulog, trabaho" ("Every day feels like a cycle of work, sleep, work").

Niwde put his dreams on hold while other people his age chased theirs. "Nakapasa ko sa board exam para sa akong profession, pero nisulod ko sa laing trabaho kay mas taas og sweldo" ("I passed the board exam for my profession, but I took another job because the pay was better"). It was a deliberate sacrifice, not one that didn't hurt, but one that was based on what was most important.

4.8.3 End: Accepts Burden with Love, Hopeful for the Future

Even with the tiredness, wasted chances, and emotional weight, Niwde doesn't see his life as a tragedy. He instead calls it a journey of love. It's not pride or duty that drives him ahead; it's the simple joy of knowing that his family is safe. "Kana nga pagpasalamat, kana nga kaayohan—mao ang akong rason" ("That gratitude, that goodness—those are my reasons"). He lets himself cry when he needs to and finds consolation in small things, like watching sitcoms, playing games, and laughing at simple things. "Kung gusto ko muhilak, muhilak ko. Dili na weakness—outlet na siya" ("If I want to cry, I cry. It's not weakness—it's an outlet"). He doesn't feel angry about the past anymore; he feels hopeful about the future. "

Niwde's narrative doesn't finish with a resolution; it ends with acceptance. This is a hope that is open-ended and based on love and quiet strength.

4.9 Themes and Meaning Making

4.9.1 Love over Obligation

Niwde didn't just become the earner out of pressure; he did it out of love. He never felt pressured by words, but by the fact that he saw the people he loves needing help. "Wala silay giingon nga 'ikaw na,' pero kabalo ko nga ang ilang kasaligan ako" ("They didn't say, 'you're the one now,' but I knew I was the one they relied on"). He didn't take on the position with anger; he did it because he thought giving was a way to show love. Giving became his means of showing love—his way of saying "I'm here, and I choose you."

He softly talks about his family, even when he's tired. He is proud of providing breakfast for his parents after working the night shift, saying, "Makapahuway ko gamay basta makakita ko nga busog sila" ("I can rest for a while as long as I see them full"). The little things you do and give up aren't duties. They're love in action.

4.9.2 Responsibility as Repayment

Niwde is very grateful for the way he was raised, and he sees becoming a provider as a natural way to pay back. He doesn't see his responsibilities as a burden; he sees them as a way to pay back the people who took care of him and raised him.

“Dili man ko dato, pero akong pagkabana sa pamilya usa na ka paagi nga makabayad ko sa ilang pag-atiman nako sauna” (“I may not be rich, but being responsible for the family is my way of repaying how they took care of me before.”)

This feeling of balance—of giving back what was once given—gives his sacrifices meaning. He doesn't think about what he's lost when he decides what to do. He thinks about what he's giving back. His dreams may be on hold, but his heart is whole because he knows he is following a calling that is connected to his past and based on appreciation.

4.9.3 Slow Progress Over Comparison

Niwde chooses peace in a world that is constantly comparing schedules and milestones. He realizes that he isn't going down the same route as most people his age, but he won't let it bother him. “Dili ko pareha sa uban nga nagkatravel na, naay balay o sakyanan. Pero kabalo ko nga sa akong ginagmay nga paagi, nagauswag gihapon ko” (“I'm not like others who are traveling already, have houses or cars. But I know that in my own small way, I'm still progressing”).

He doesn't glance to the side; he looks inside. He doesn't judge his success by what he has, but by how consistent, faithful, and hard he works. He cherishes the road, no matter how slow it is, because every step forward is hard-earned and essential. He walks with purpose, not speed.

4.9.4 Humor and Distraction as Survival

Niwde is so weary some nights that he can barely talk. But instead of giving up, he laughs. These aren't simply ways to escape reality; they're also ways to stay alive. “Magtan-aw ra ko'g mga sitcoms o kataw-anan nga videos. Makawala gamay sa kakapoy ug pressure” (“I just watch sitcoms or funny videos. It helps ease the tiredness and pressure”).

He chuckles not because life is easy, but because it lets him breathe. His jokes aren't a way to get away; they're a way to fight back. He does this to show the world that he still chooses joy even when he's tired. He also lets himself cry when his feelings get too strong. “Kung gusto ko muhilak, muhilak ko. Dili na weakness—outlet na siya” (“If I want to cry, I cry. It's not weakness—it's an outlet”).

Niwde develops a life based not on big wins but on profound meaning. In this life, duty is a reaction to love, progress is measured by peace, and comedy is a gentle barrier against the weight of the world.

4.10 Tone and Voice

4.10.1 Honest and Candid

Niwde talks like people do when they've been up all night and all day: no sugarcoating, no flare, just the reality. His voice is honest and based on a fact that doesn't seek pity, just understanding. “Lisod gyud, labi na kung ikaw tanan ang saligan” (“It's tough, especially when you're the one everyone relies on”). He doesn't pretend to say what he means. He means what he says. He doesn't disguise what he

feels.

He's also candid—open about the moments he's not okay, and unafraid to admit that he sometimes feels left behind. “Usahay, makapangutana ko sa akong kaugalingon kung kanus-a pud ko makauna sa akong kaugalingong damgo” (“Sometimes, I ask myself when I'll finally get to chase my own dreams”). These are not complaints; they are admissions. They show a young guy who has given up his freedom as a child to keep his family alive, and he knows what it costs.

4.10.2 Weary but Resilient

But even when he's exhausted, there is a quiet strength in his voice. He claims he doesn't always have everything together, but he keeps going. “Gikapoy ko, pero dili man pwede hunong” (“I'm tired, but stopping is not an option”). He knows what he can and can't do, yet he doesn't give up. His strength isn't loud; it's steady, like someone who is walking with worn shoes but still going.

4.10.3 Tone Shifts Between Pragmatic and Deeply Personal

The way he tells his narrative changes. He sounds like a planner sometimes, keeping track of his schedule, money, and plans. He tells about how he manages his two jobs, helps out at home, and yet finds time for himself. It's realistic—realistic and measured. But there are times when the weight gets too much, and his speech becomes very personal. Like when he talks about his dreams: “Gusto ko nga makabot pud nako ang akong kaugalingong tinguha, pero karon, kinahanglan sa pamilya ang akong kusog” (“I want to reach my own goals too, but right now, my family needs my strength”).

The tone gets softer in these hushed admissions. The planner who is good at math becomes the hopeful son. The worker who doesn't give up becomes the dreaming guy. His speech has both rationality and desire, as well as pressure and purpose. But he never sounds angry. He narrates his story with modesty, if anything. He understands that life hasn't gone according to his schedule, but he believes that something lovely is still waiting for him. He doesn't end his stories with exclamation points; instead, he closes them with periods of quiet faith: “Makalahutay ra ko ani, gamay-gamay lang pero padayon lang” (“I'll get through this, slowly but steadily, just need to keep going”).

Niwde's tone is like that of many silent fighters—those who carry their loads without complaining, cry and then wipe their tears in silence, and nevertheless get up with a sense of purpose. It's a voice that has been sculpted by bad times, but not broken by them.

4.11.1 Identity Construction

For many people, becoming the breadwinner is something they have to do. They have to take a job they don't want to do and make a sacrifice. Niwde, on the other hand, is different. He doesn't think of his role in the family as a prison; he thinks of it as a calling. He doesn't resent his responsibilities; instead, he feels a modest sense of pride in them. “Wala man ko gipugos ani. Ako mismo ang nipili nga motabang, kay nakita nako nga kinahanglan ko sa among pamilya” (“No one forced me into this. I chose to help because I saw that my family needed me”).

These words may seem simple, yet they say a lot. Niwde doesn't see himself as a victim of circumstance; he sees himself as someone who noticed the need and stepped in. That choice, that moment when he said "ako na lang" ("I'll do it"), has changed who he is becoming. Not just a son, not just the youngest, but the one who is always there, the one who can be counted on, and the silent leader of the house.

Of course, he knows about the sacrifices. Dreams put off, rest put off. But he doesn't let those costs define who he is. He keeps the meaning behind them, though. "Gikapoy ko usahay, pero malingaw ko makakita nga nangaon akong mga igsoon nga walay kabalaka" ("Sometimes I get tired, but I find joy in seeing my siblings eat without worry").

That's who he is. Someone who doesn't care about awards or praise, but instead finds purpose in the times of peace, may give to others. He doesn't think he's less for giving more. He finds strength and significance in that job. "Di man sa ingon nga ako ra ang makatabang, pero ako man ang pinakaduol, mao nang ako nalang una" ("It's not that I'm the only one who can help, but I'm the one closest to the need, so I stepped up first").

In this case, his identity is based on being ready, not on being a martyr. Not because of the weight of expectations, but because of the desire. He sees himself as someone who does things when they need to be done, not because he has to, but because he wants to keep the people he loves safe. In this scenario, Niwde is not the tragic breadwinner; he is the intended provider. He enjoys his job, even when it's hard, since he knows he selected it out of love, not duty. This is what gives his story strength. What he offers, not what was taken from him, makes him who he is.

4.12 Agency and Motivation

4.12.1 Moves between realism and faith

Niwde is a real person. He realizes how heavy the responsibility is, and he never tries to make it sound better than it is. Life has put him in many different roles, and instead of denying it, he accepts it as it is. "Dili man lalim magduha ka trabaho, pero mao na lang gyud. Dili pwede mopili-pili kung ang pamilya nimo nanginganglan." ("It's not easy working two jobs, but that's just how it is. You can't afford to be choosy when your family needs you.")

His faith gives him optimism, but his realism keeps him stable. Faith is what keeps him going when his efforts seem minor. He believes that his sacrifices will not be for nothing and that God is in the details. "Wala ko kabalo unsay mahitabo, pero kabalo ko nga naa gyuy rason nganong ako ni gipasan. Dili ko biyaan sa Ginoo." ("I don't know what will happen, but I believe there's a reason why this was given to me. God won't abandon me.")

This back-and-forth between realism and religion helps him stay alive, not by running away, but by anchoring and grace.

4.12.2 Adapts Work for Sustainability

Niwde is not simply getting by; he is making plans. He knows what he can and can't do, and he makes changes when he has to. His decisions show that he isn't desperate, but that he has a plan. He recognizes that burnout doesn't help anyone; therefore, he looks for ways to make his work manageable. "Nag-

apply kog part-time nga flexible para dili maapektuhan akong usa ka trabaho. Gakompromiso lang ko, pero kinahanglan.” (“I applied for a part-time job with flexible hours so it won’t affect my main job. I just compromise, because I have to.”)

This change shows what really drives him: he wants to be reliable not only in the short term, but for a long time. He is learning to work smarter to safeguard his value, not to lower it. Faith-guided realism and strategic adaptability are the two patterns that make up Niwde's agency and motivation. He is not just reacting to life; he is thinking and feeling at the same time. One heavy yet hopeful step at a time is what keeps him going.

Table 4: Narratives of Cedy Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Takes role due to necessity; Middle: Juggles
Meaning-Making	progress over comparison; Humor and distraction as survival.
Tone & Voice	Honest, candid, sometimes weary but resilient. Tone shifts between pragmatic and deeply personal.
Identity Construction	“I help not because I must but because I want to” — Embraces role with pride and without resentment.
Agency & Motivation	Moves between realism and faith; adapts work for sustainability.
Overall Narrative Theme	Embracing the breadwinner role as a personal mission rooted in love, navigating life with strategic sacrifice and emotional grounding.

4.13 Narratives of Balancing Youth, Joy, and Responsibility

Cedy goes through life like he's walking a tightrope, with his arms held wide between responsibility and pleasure, never totally leaning to one side. He is the youngest in the family, yet he has the same responsibilities as the oldest: he is the earner. But he isn't bitter at all. Instead, there's a rhythm that goes back and forth between being tired and having fun. “Grabe ka-pressure, pero enjoyable pud siya at the same time.” (The pressure is intense, but it’s enjoyable at the same time.)

He doesn't deny how heavy the duty is, but his tone makes it sound like he likes it, as if love makes responsibility something he can handle and even enjoy. He has a lot of things to do every day: work during the day and study at night. “Kapoy sa buntag, tapos mudugang pa gyud pagkagabii. Mao na, diretso hagba, dili na ko mukaon og dinner kay 10 PM nako makauli.” (I'm already tired in the morning, and then more work piles up at night. I usually collapse into bed and skip dinner because I get home at 10 PM.)

Even when he's tired, he selects the routine without complaining, just accepting it. He finds tiny ways to deal with things, including skipping social events to sleep, getting short meals at Wendy's, and staying alone when he needs to. "Ako na bayad sa bills like wifi, suga, ug tubig. Maikog man gud ko, mao ako nalang mismo mohatag." (I pay for the bills like WiFi, electricity, and water. I feel shy asking, so I just give without being told.)

There's a calm maturity in how he manages finances - not from responsibility, but from initiative. He wasn't forced to do it; he did it because he saw the need and couldn't stand to see his family suffer. Still, Cedy's happy, friendly side comes through. "Gusto unta ko mu-join sa organization sa akong friend, gusto unta ko mag-host sa ilang events. Dream gyud nako ang hosting, pero nawala siya tungod sa akong responsibility." (I wanted to join my friend's organization and host events — hosting is my dream, but I gave it up because of my responsibilities.)

There is no resentment in his voice; only a hint of sadness. He hasn't forgotten his dreams; they're only on hold for now. He thinks that even when chances come and go, they aren't lost; they're only put off for a reason. His emotional stability is what keeps him going. When the weight gets too much, he runs away—not to go away, but to breathe. "Nagatravel ko, ako lang isa... para ma-refresh akong mind." (I travel alone... to refresh my mind.)

He gets his strength back in these quiet places, where he can remember how happy he is to be the youngest in the family. He is not an adult with a lot of responsibilities; he is still a child who plays games and smiles at the simple things. Even though he has a lot of duties, Cedy doesn't allow them to take away who he is. "Gina-enjoy gihapon nako nga bunso ko. Dili ko gusto madala ra sa stress." (I still enjoy being the youngest. I don't want stress to consume me.)

He walks his path not out of anger, but with purpose. He chose to give, and he owns it. "Ako gyud ning decision sa akong life. Naa sad koy timeline ug plan, ug support sad akong family." (This is my decision in life. I have a timeline, a plan, and my family's support.) He always sees sacrifices as steps forward, never as dead ends. He tells himself that being an adult isn't just about taking on duties; it's also about making a life that matters. "Ang trabaho nako karon, mao ni akong foundation para sa akong mga damgo." (My job now is the foundation for my dreams.)

Cedy supports not only his family but also himself in the silent time between salaries and electricity bills. He does this with humor, purpose, and unending delight. His youth isn't lost in the weight of duty; instead, it is redefined by it, brought to life by service, and profoundly entrenched in love.

4.14 Narrative Structure

4.14.1 Beginning: Takes Role Due to Necessity

Cedy never thought about being the earner. He became one because he had to, not because his family made him. It was because of the harsh realities their home faced. When Cedy's father lost his job as a

pedicab driver and his sister's graduation was delayed because her course was too hard, Cedy felt it was time for him to step in. "Si Papa pud nawad-an og pedicab. Wala pud siya trabaho atong time nga nagsugod ko og work. So ako nalang gyud ang nitake over sa responsibility." (Papa also lost his pedicab. He had no job at the time I started working. So I was the one who took over the responsibility.) It wasn't a big deal when he took on the post; it was realistic. He saw the hole and filled it. His family was skeptical at first since they didn't like that the youngest was now the provider, but his honesty gradually won them over. "Before, against gyud sila nga manarbaho ko... Pero tungod sa among kalisod, nisugot nalang sila." (Before, they were against me working... But because of our hardship, they eventually agreed.)

4.14.2 Middle: Juggles Joy and Pressure

Once he started the job, Cedy suddenly found himself on a tightrope between being tired and being happy. His days were filled - working from early till afternoon, then studying into the night. "Kapoy sa buntag, tapos mudugang pa gyud pagkagabii. Mao na, diretso hagba...Dili na ko mukaon og dinner kay 10 PM nako makauli." (Tired in the morning, and even more tired at night. That's why I collapsed right away... I don't even eat dinner because I get home at 10 PM.)

He made hard choices, like giving up going out, doing his hobbies, and even his dream of becoming a host. He did this not because he was giving up, but because his priorities had changed. "Gusto unta ko mag-host sa ilang events. Dream gyud nako ang hosting, pero nawala siya tungod sa akong responsibility." (I wanted to host their events. Hosting was my dream, but I gave it up because of my responsibilities.)

But joy never really went away. It stayed in his family's thanks, the comfort of a full fridge, and the quiet pleasure he felt every time he helped. "Ang among ref, pirmi na puno karon — dili pareha sauna. Happy kaayo ko." (Our refrigerator is always full now — unlike before. I'm thrilled.)

4.14.3 End: Finds personal satisfaction

Over time, what started out as a burden became something important. Cedy no longer thought of his situation as something he was stuck in. He took delight in it and handled it like an adult. "Mas positive ko ug mas resilient. Happy nako kay makahappy pud nga makita nga nakatabang ko sa akong family." (I'm more positive and more resilient now. I'm happy now because it's also fulfilling to see that I can help my family.)

He even gave his life an "8 out of 10," not because it's perfect, but because it's fulfilling. This shows how far he's come. "Mas taas akong quality of life karon. Siguro tungod sa satisfaction nga makatabang ko sa akong family." (My quality of life is better now — maybe because of the satisfaction of helping my family.)

Cedy stands strong, no matter what the demands or sacrifices are. He still listens to his parents, respects their authority, and doesn't let his job go to his head. "Dili ko magpakabana nga tungod ako na ang provider, dapat ako na ang sundon." (I don't act like just because I'm the provider, they should follow me.)

Cedy's narrative isn't just about survival; it's also about necessity, pressure, and tranquility. It's a

narrative about growing in grace, loving while you work, and finding out that sometimes the weight gets lighter when you walk with purpose.

4.15 Themes and Meaning Making

4.15.1 Purpose in Pressure

Cedy's narrative is full of stress: hard days at work, late evenings as a student, and bills that never stop coming. But he never allowed the stress to get to him. He found meaning in it instead. “Grabe ka-pressure, pero enjoyable pud siya at the same time.” (It’s very pressuring, but at the same time, it’s also enjoyable.)

His days are tiring. He skips dinner, goes to bed tired, and gives up social events—all for his family. “Kapoy sa buntag, tapos mudugang pa gyud pagkagabii... Dili na ko mukaon og dinner kay 10 PM nako makauli.” (Tired in the morning, then more added at night... I don’t even eat dinner because I get home at 10 PM.)

But he doesn't feel sorry for himself. He changes the weight into something worth carrying since he knows that his work brings order and harmony to their home. “Structure ug well-being sa family. Kay kung makatabang ko, kabalo ko nga mas dako akong matabang nila.” (Structure and well-being of the family. Because if I help, I know I can do even more for them.) What had felt like pressure became his path, and walking it made him feel more like himself.

4.15.2 Service through Joy

Cedy's actions of service don't come with anger. He serves with joy because he wants to give, not just because he has to. “Dili lang siya obligasyon, gusto pud nako buhaton.” (It’s not just an obligation; I also want to do it.)

He pays the bills, buys groceries, pays for school, and even gives his sister money. It's hard work, but the thanks he gets make it easier. “Makatabang ko nila since makahatag ko allowance sa akong Ate. Very thankful and grateful kaayo si Ate, so usahay mawala pud ang pressure.” (I get to help them since I give my sister an allowance. She’s thankful, so sometimes the pressure disappears.)

He keeps giving, even though his friends don't always grasp why he has so little for himself. Not because he has to, but because it feels good to help. “Matingala nalang akong friends nga wala koy para sa akong kaugalingon, pero tungod gyud sa akong bayranan.” (My friends wonder why I don’t spend for myself, but it’s really because of the bills I need to pay.)

4.15.3 Spiritual Gratitude

His heart is thankful and grounded, not just emotionally but also spiritually. He doesn't look at his sacrifices with anger; instead, he is humble and quietly happy that he can help. “Happy nako kay makahappy pud nga makita nga nakatabang ko sa akong family, ug happy pud sila nga nagaprovide gyud ko.” (I’m so glad now because it makes me so glad to see I can help my family—and they’re so glad that I’m providing.)

He knows that staying in the obligation, instead of running away from it, is what helps him grow mentally, emotionally, and even spiritually. “Giisip nako ni nga part sa akong journey. Sauna, dali ra

ko madiscourage. Karon, mas matured nako. Mas positive ko ug mas resilient.” (I consider this as part of my journey. Before, I got discouraged easily. Now, I’m more mature, more positive, and more resilient.)

Cedy doesn't act like his role is a burden. He wears it as a silent calling, given in love, lived out in action, and accepted in faith. What started as a way to stay alive turned into a mission, and what felt like giving up became his way of devotion.

4.16 Tone and Voice

4.16.1 Balanced Lightness and Realism

Cedy talks like someone who's been through a lot, but he still smiles. His voice sounds like he has a lot of responsibility, yet it's never heavy enough to take away the happiness he keeps inside. His voice is a mix of lightness and realism, like someone traveling through a storm and still seeing flowers by the road. He admits the strain from the start, but then he swiftly follows it up with something brighter: “Grabe ka-pressure, pero enjoyable pud siya at the same time.” (It’s very pressuring, but at the same time, it’s also enjoyable.)

He doesn't deny that he is tired, that he has missed dinners, or that he has made sacrifices alone. He actually talks about them openly: “Kapoy sa buntag, tapos mudugang pa gyud pagkagabii... Dili na ko mukaon og dinner kay 10 PM nako makauli.” (Tired in the morning, then even more added at night... I don’t eat dinner because I get home at 10 PM.)

But he doesn't sound resentful when he says it. It's just life, honest and raw, told with acceptance. He talks about his routines and his sacrifices calmly. He doesn't make things more dramatic; he keeps his tone consistent. He didn't talk about his regrets when he had to put his goals on hold, like being the lead in a youth theater or going to events he used to adore. He just understood. “Sayang kaayo kay naay project unta nga ako ang lead role, pero gidecline nako.” (It’s a shame because there was a project where I would’ve had the lead role, but I declined it.)

There is always a place for thankfulness in his stories: “Happy nako kay makahappy pud nga makita nga nakatabang ko sa akong family.” (I’m happy now because it makes me so glad to see I can help my family.)

Even when he thinks of times when he was discouraged or anxious, he doesn't spiral. Instead, he tells the narrative with maturity and perspective: “Giisip nako ni nga part sa akong journey.” (I consider this as part of my journey.)

And when it gets to be too much, he doesn't lose it. Instead, he finds solace in solitude, tiny breaks, and time alone: “Mulaag ko panagsa. Makahelp siya nako para makalingaw ug makalimot sa stress.” (I go on solo trips sometimes. It helps me enjoy and forget about the stress.)

Cedy's voice isn't loud, but it is steady. He doesn't tell his story to get sympathy; he tells it to show what it's like to have both good and bad things happen to you at the same time. His tone shows that he is growing up quickly, yet he still remembers the things that make life lovely, like a giggle, a moment of tranquility, or a thank-you from his sister. He is grounded, but not angry. Tired, but not hurt. Useful, but always lovely. The way Cedy tells his story reminds us that life might be hard, but there is always room to breathe, smile, and keep going.

4.17 Identity Construction

Cedy never thought he would be the one to keep the family together. As the youngest child, many thought he would be the one who didn't have to deal with hard things. He would be sheltered, maybe even spoiled, and not given too many duties too soon. But life had other ideas. And when things changed, so did his job. "Before, against gyud sila nga manarbaho ko. Murag natandog ilang ego kay bata pa ko pero muprovide na." (Before, they were really against me working. I think their pride was hurt because I was still the youngest, yet already providing.)

In the beginning, there was resistance, not just from his parents but also from within himself. There was a quiet tension between who he was meant to be and who he was becoming. Their bunso had to change into something both admirable and sobering: the primary breadwinner for the family. But instead of letting that produce problems or anger, Cedy used understanding and quiet strength to connect the two roles. "So ako nalang gyud ang nitake over sa responsibility." (So I just really took over the responsibility.)

He did it because he loved them, not because he had to. He didn't have to play that role. He decided with clarity and courage. He spotted the holes in his family's needs: they didn't have a steady income, small enterprises were unpredictable, and his siblings were taking too long to graduate. He didn't say anything. He changed. He never lost touch with the fun sides of who he was, though. Even though he worked long hours and didn't have much money, Cedy kept his youth in quiet, deliberate ways: "Gina-enjoy gihapon nako nga bunso ko. Dili ko gusto madalara sa stress." (I still enjoy being the youngest. I don't want to be swallowed by the stress.)

It's incredible how he keeps trying to keep his happiness. It would be easy to become hard if you had to pay bills, go to school, and buy food. But Cedy finds modest ways to get away, like going on trips alone, playing games, or even just choosing peace over pride. That's when his true self comes through: he won't let responsibility take over his life. He doesn't allow the money he brings home to determine the order of things, even at home. His humility maintains their love strong. "Dili nako ipafeel sa akong parents nga ako na ang main provider... Dili ko magpakabana nga tungod ako na ang provider, dapat ako na ang sundon." (I don't let my parents feel that I'm the leading provider... I don't act like just because I'm providing, they should follow me.)

Cedy believes that respect goes both ways, not because of who makes more money, but because of the tie that keeps them together. He still knows who he is as the youngest, but it's changed. He is now the protector, the calm decision-maker, and the compassionate guide. But he still listens to his parents, takes their counsel, and makes sure they never feel out of place.

This is what makes him unique: he carries the weight without changing the center. He finished his studies, yet he doesn't pretend to be better than everybody else. He gives, yet he doesn't brag. He gives up things, but he doesn't whine. And even when he has to deal with tiredness and responsibilities, he does it with a sense of joy. "Though busy ko, gina-try gihapon nako magpabilin ang joy bisan naa koy responsibility." (Though I'm busy, I still try to keep joy even with my responsibilities.)

Cedy's story isn't only about making money; it's also about being someone who won't let their burdens define them. His tale shows us that we don't always get to choose our identity, but we can always shape it with grace. He teaches us that even if you're the youngest, you can still have the strongest heart.

At the end, Cedy is still the bunso, but he also becomes the backbone. And somehow, he bears both of his identities with care, balance, and purpose.

4.18 Agency and Motivation

4.18.1 Finds Motivation in Balance and Self-Awareness

For Cedy, becoming the breadwinner wasn't a jump; it was a conscious stroll driven by calm clarity instead of desperation. He didn't go that way because someone instructed him to; he went that way because he knew someone had to. And when he did, he found the drive not in big goals, but in balance and knowing who he was. "Ako gyud ning decision sa akong life. Naa sad koy timeline ug plan." (This was my own decision in life. I also have a timeline and future strategy.)

He never wanted to prove anything to anyone. It was quite personal, though. Cedy is the type of person who follows their gut. When he has to, he steps back, thinks, and finds strength in the peaceful area between tension and comprehension. "Pag mastress ko, mahilom lang ko. Dili ko dayon mudesisyon. Mag-step back ko, unya ginatan-aw nako ang sitwasyon—unsa ang possible consequences, ug unsaon nako pag-deal." (When I'm stressed, I just become quiet. I don't decide immediately. I step back and look at the situation—what the possible consequences are, and how I'll deal with it.)

Cedy has a particular discipline about how he lives his life. He doesn't use denial or numbness to deal with things, establish objectives, or get through them. Instead, he has a strong sense of mindfulness. He knows how important his job is, but he also knows when to take a break. He chooses tranquility when things get too much. "Mulaag ko panagsa. Makahelp siya nako para makalingaw ug makalimot sa stress." (I go out occasionally. It helps me to have fun and forget the stress.)

Unlike some people who become lost in their roles, Cedy is careful to stay true to himself. He creates time for happiness and being alone. Not to go away from anything, but to feed his soul. His self-care has changed from something he does on a whim to something he does with a purpose. "Mas naay purpose akong self-care karon para masustain nako akong health ug dili ko mapugos ug undang sa trabaho." (My self-care now has more purpose, so I can sustain my health and not be forced to stop working.)

This balance between duty and self, family and future, is what keeps him grounded. He realizes that the work he does today won't last forever. It's a step up. He doesn't just want to get through this moment; he wants to establish something that will last. A future in therapy. A life in which he may aid not only his family but also other people. "Gapaningkamot ko nga mahimong stepping stone siya. Gusto gyud unta ko ug academe, HR, or counseling." (I'm working hard to make this a stepping stone. I really want to be in academe, HR, or counseling.)

But what really jumps out in Cedy's story is how he refuses to let pressure get the best of him. He doesn't act like a victim. He doesn't wear his pain like a medal. Instead, he carefully rearranges his life, choosing to be strong instead of weak. Every day when he wakes up, he has a list of options to make, not tasks. He handles his life with inner wisdom and quiet determination, whether it's making a budget, helping out at home, or understanding when to take a break.

Cedy's drive isn't loud. It doesn't make major preparations or gestures to let people know. Instead, it moves consistently via awareness, thought, and a heart that just wants to do good while keeping

complete. And in that gentle balance, he has found something strong: the kind of inspiration that doesn't fade away but stays strong and purposeful.

Table 5: Narratives of Lao Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Assumes role with awareness. Middle: Learns emotional control and finances. End: Protects self while serving others.
Themes & Meaning-Making	Healing through duty; reflection; emotional regulation.
Tone & Voice	Firm, clear-headed, contemplative.
Identity Construction	Steady post—identity as quiet foundation.
Agency & Motivation	Finds peace in structure and routine.
Overall Narrative Theme	Quiet self-leadership in navigating family hardship with internal strength and boundaries.

4.19 Narratives of Leading Through Family Hardship with Strength and Boundaries

Lao never wanted to be the family's provider, but when his father died, the house was quiet, and so was the weight of responsibility. He gently went forward as the youngest and only son. “Ako nalang jud ang musalo sa obligasyon ni papa.” (I just decided to carry on Papa’s responsibilities myself.) He didn't make any pledges or statements. He just started doing what needed to be done.

He doesn't have his mornings. He gets up before everybody else and starts cooking and waking up his siblings: “Ako pay magluto sa kaon, sa sud-an, ug mag-prepare sa table. Ako pay mupukaw sailaha kay para mukaon na sila.” (I’m the one who cooks the food and prepares the table. I’m also the one who wakes them up so they can eat.) He subsequently goes to work at the call center, where he has to deal with the stress of quotas and close supervision. “Usahay masingkahan pa sa amo labi na pag busy kaayo ang office.” (Sometimes I even get scolded by my boss, especially when the office is too busy.) When the office lights go out and everyone else goes home, Lao either works late or goes home to cook again. He doesn't make big remarks to show his presence; instead, he does small things like cooking meals, paying bills, and getting medicine for his mother. “Dili ko mahimutang ug dili makainom si mama.” (I can’t rest if Mama doesn’t get to take her medicine.)

But Lao's leadership isn't loud. It comes from a power inside that doesn't need praise. He knows what they gave up and how much it hurt. “Usahay makahilak ko sa kakapoy.” (Sometimes I cry from exhaustion.) But Lao maintains his inner space tightly, even when it's heavy. He knows what his physical and mental boundaries are, and when he gets to them, he pulls back just enough to breathe. “Usahay kalimtan sa nako ang pagiging breadwinner ug ginasulit ang leave nako sa work para lang matulog whole day.” (Sometimes I intentionally forget that I’m the breadwinner and spend my leave days sleeping the whole day.) This is how he draws a line: not out of anger, but to protect himself.

He doesn't spiral even when his social life decreases and he feels alone. Instead, he gets silent power from talking to his mother. "Kada uli nako, naa jud si Mama makigstorya saako, ug somehow mugaan akong ginabati." (Every time I come home, Mama talks to me, and somehow, the weight I carry becomes lighter.)

His plans, like going to another country, are still on hold. Not forgotten, just put off. "Gusto jud unta ko mag-abroad... pero ako lang jud maong dili sad ko kabiya sa amo." (I really wanted to go abroad... but I'm the only one, so I can't just leave them.) For now, he picks being there over going after it. He finds significance in that choice, even when it costs him money, friends, and happiness. "Dili man gud jud mabayran ang kalipay sa akong pamilya." (The joy of seeing my family happy is genuinely priceless.)

This is the story of Lao. A quiet way to guide yourself. One that doesn't need attention yet does deserve it. Big successes do not mark his life, but by the serene strength of someone who carries a lot and still loves, serves, and protects what matters most, even the delicate aspects of himself.

4.20 Narrative Structure

4.20.1 Beginning: Assumes Role with Awareness

Lao's story doesn't start with confusion; it begins with understanding. He knew what to do as soon as his father died. "Ako nalang jud ang musalo sa obligasyon ni Papa." (I just decided to carry on Papa's responsibilities myself.) Even though he was the youngest, no one else in the family was better suited to take over. His older siblings were taking care of the youngest children and having trouble finding steady work. His mother was getting older and unwell, so she couldn't carry the same things she used to. He didn't have to take part; he accepted it quietly. He didn't look for someone else to take charge. Instead, he started getting up earlier than everyone else to make breakfast and wake them up. "Ako pay mupukaw sailaha kay para mukaon na sila." (I'm the one who wakes them up so they can eat.) This was his way of helping the family move on to a new chapter without having anyone feel worse about the loss than they already did.

4.20.2 Middle: Learns Emotional Control and Finances

As Lao became more entrenched in his position, the weight got heavier, both physically and mentally. He was under a lot of stress since he had to pay bills, buy his mother's medications, and keep everyone else afloat. "Usahay mag-overthink ko basin dili na maigo akong kwarta na muabutay na sweldo." (Sometimes I overthink whether my salary will even be enough.)

He learned how to make the most of every peso and look for free medicine at the health center. He borrowed money when he needed to and worked extra hours on the weekends to make up for the time he didn't have. "Gapamasahero ko para makadungag sa need bayaran." (I take passengers on my motorcycle just to help pay for what's needed at home.)

He knew he couldn't fall apart emotionally. He held back tears even when he was so tired that he wanted to cry. "Usahay makahilak ko sa kakapoy pero kailangan man kayanon." (Sometimes I cry from exhaustion, but I have to endure it.) He taught himself to keep his complaints and grief to himself since his family needed him to look strong.

4.20.3 End: Protects Self While Serving Others

Lao has found a calm rhythm so far. He still helps his family, but now he's starting to draw soft lines. Not to get away from them, but to protect himself. He doesn't go out on his days off; he sleeps instead. "Ginasulit ang leave nako sa work para lang matulog whole day." (I use my work leave to sleep the whole day.)

He chats to his mom at night when he gets home, not simply to tell her what happened, but to let it all out. "Tungod ana nakatabang siya na mugaan akong ginabati." (Because of that, it helps lighten what I feel.) He is not merely the breadwinner when she is around. He is still her youngest son.

He knows precisely why he is choosing to stay instead of pursuing his ambition to work abroad. "Gusto unta ko mag-abroad... pero dili sad ko kabiya sa amo." (I wanted to go abroad... but I can't just leave our family.) He keeps his limits by controlling his time, ideas, and limited energy. He stays strong and whole by doing this.

Lao's structure is one of incremental maturation. He starts by stepping into his father's shoes, then he learns how to carry the weight with strategy, and lastly, he builds silent defenses around himself while still being there for his family.

4.21 Themes and Meaning Making

4.21.1 Healing through Duty

Lao didn't choose his role because he wanted to be powerful; he took it on out of love, grief, and a strong sense of duty. He not only had to carry the family on his shoulders after his father died, but also in his heart. "Ako nalang jud ang musalo sa obligasyon ni Papa." (I just decided to carry on Papa's responsibilities myself.)

What could have made things worse slowly turned into a way to heal. He prepared every meal, got up early every morning to get ready for his siblings, and drove people around on the side to earn money. These weren't simply jobs; they were ways for him to remember his father and prove to himself that he could keep the family going.

"Bisan kapoy, ipakita nimo na okay raka." (Even when you're exhausted, you show that you're okay.)

Lao steadily healed his wounds by turning up every day, even if it was just to be quiet. He treats his pain by turning it into love.

4.21.2 Reflection

Lao's journey is complete with peaceful thoughts. He doesn't make choices on the spur of the moment; he thinks them out. He always asks himself questions, not just about what's best for the family but also about what's best for him in the long run. "Makahuna-huna ko nga dapat as parent, ako sad jud unahon akong health..." (I think sometimes that as a future parent, I should also start prioritizing my health...) He doesn't say much out loud, but he thinks a lot about himself. He thinks about every choice he makes as he talks about his desire to go abroad and why he stays. "Naguol ko sa bayrunon para sa requirements... pero dili sad ko kabiya sa amo." (I'm worried about the expenses for the requirements... but I can't leave our family either.)

He doesn't see his regrets and missed chances as failures; instead, he sees them as elements of a broader

picture. He accepts that life is layered and that his time to dream may come later.

4.21.3 Emotional Regulation

Lao's emotional self-control is one of the strongest elements in his story. He doesn't hide how he feels, but he does control them discreetly and with a lot of discipline. "Usahay makahilak ko sa kakapoy... pero kailangan man kayanon." (Sometimes I cry from exhaustion... but I have to endure it.)

He says that there are times when he breaks down, but he always finds a way to pull himself together. He talks to his mom to feel better and to get his mind off things. "Tungod ana nakatabang siya na mugaan akong ginabati." (Because of that, it helps lighten what I feel.)

He even takes care of his mental health by doing minor things, like sleeping during his time off. "Ginasulit ang leave nako... para lang matulog whole day." (I make the most of my leave just to sleep the whole day.)

He doesn't let anxiety about his future, health, or being alone stop him, even when it does. Instead, he accepts them and keeps going. "Makahuna-huna jud ko ug dili malikayan na basin mapariha ko sa akong Papa." (I really can't help but think that I might end up like my father.)

Lao is not hiding his feelings when he regulates his emotions; he is guiding them. He realizes that a lot is at stake, so he chooses tranquility over terror for the people he loves.

Lao's narrative shows how responsibility may help you recover, how silent thought can make you stronger, and how emotional control is not the same as not feeling pain; it's the brave choice to keep going nevertheless. His way of making meaning isn't spectacular or poetic, but it's based on love, sacrifice, and the hope that one day his quiet work may turn into something bigger.

4.22 Tone and Voice

4.22.1 Firm

Lao may whisper, but his words are full of conviction. From the very outset, his tone shows that he is determined, as if he had already practiced his part in silence before anyone asked him to step up. When he said, "Ako nalang jud ang musalo sa obligasyon ni Papa." (I just decided to carry on Papa's responsibilities myself), there was no hesitation. It wasn't a question—it was a declaration.

He doesn't sound bitter when he talks about sacrifice; he sounds determined. Even when he talks about having to choose between his wants and those of his family, he says, "Bahala'g naay dili mabayaran na usa ka adlaw kaysa naman buong buhay sa akong pamilya na sila nasad ang malisod." (I'd rather miss one day's pay than have my family suffer for a lifetime.) His voice isn't dramatic; it's steady, chosen, and certain.

4.22.2 Clear-Headed

Lao doesn't make bad times sound fine nor worse. Even when he talks about hard truths like money problems, family obligations, his father's death, and even his health issues, his tone stays calm. He doesn't panic when he faces these problems; he faces them with realism.

When he recalls budgeting struggles, he says plainly, "Lisod jud kaayo i-budget maong makautang-utang jud ko." (It's tough to budget, so I end up borrowing money.) There is no feeling sorry there. Just

being clear. He is aware of the issue. He names it. He deals with it.

He doesn't sugarcoat when he talks about the things he did for love: "Kato jud akong giingon ganina nga mga sakripisyo gikan sa ambition, hangtod sa imong sariling kalipay kay mawala jud siya sa imong priority." (Like I said earlier, sacrifices from ambition to personal happiness are pushed out of priority.) Lao knows what the expenses are, yet he accepts them with a strong and sensible mind.

4.22.3 Contemplative

There is a river of serious thought running through Lao's steady voice. He doesn't just talk about what he does; he thinks about what it means, what it means for the future, and what he can learn from it. His voice often sounds like someone who has lived a long time and thinks about what they want to say before they say it.

He thinks about what his family wants from him, not with anger, but with understanding: "Siguro tungod jud kay ako man ang lalaki sa among tanan... required jud nga ako ang musalo." (Maybe because I'm the only man in the family, it was expected of me to take on the responsibility.) He observes the cultural forces at play, so there is acceptance and also critique.

He doesn't panic about the future; he is very worried about it: "Nagahuna-huna ko nga basin mapariha ko sa akong Papa... tungod aning pagsalo nako sa iyang responsibilidad." (I worry that I might end up like my father... because I've taken on his responsibility.) He doesn't jump to conclusions; instead, he analyzes, watches, and weighs.

Lao's voice is not loud. It doesn't declare. It doesn't say anything. But it is evident in its reasoning, strong in its objective, and very thoughtful. Even if his voice is modest, it shows that he is a person who has grounded himself in self-leadership, fashioned not by big speeches but by small actions of compassion and strength every day.

4.23 Identity Construction

Lao doesn't talk about himself in big, loud language or make excellent descriptions. Instead, he lives his identity in the silent hours before dawn, in meals made without applause, in debts paid with borrowed time, and in obligations he takes on without being instructed. People may think that being the youngest makes him weak, but for Lao, it was a choice that made him strong, not his age.

He shares, "Ako nalang jud ang musalo sa obligasyon ni Papa." (I just decided to carry on Papa's responsibilities myself.) This wasn't just a time to stand up; it was the time he established the foundation for who he would become. Lao doesn't see himself as the loudest or most accomplished person; he sees himself as present, reliable, and solid. He became the stable post that the family leaned on, not because it was expected of him, but because he felt he could handle it.

He has a strong sense of who he is that comes from being committed, not from feeling entitled. Even as the bunso, he says with quiet strength, "Bisan ako ang breadwinner ug main provider sa among balay, wala jud nako gipafeel sa akong pamilya nga naa silay utang kabubut-on sa ako." (Even though I am the breadwinner and leading provider at home, I never made my family feel like they owe me anything.) This statement shows that the person knows themselves very well. Lao doesn't do things to get noticed. His identity is based on helping others without feeling superior and giving without

becoming angry.

And even when he feels the pressure of being left behind in terms of social life, emotions, and career progress, he doesn't compare or envy. Instead, he admits with humility, “Mura nakog nakalimtan... kay sige nalang man kog rason nga naa koy trabaho.” (It feels like I've been forgotten... because I keep giving the same reason: that I have work.) But even when he's alone and silent, he never leaves his post.

Lao's story isn't a loud tale of survival; it's a strong sense of who he is—a person who commits. Someone who keeps going. A person who knows their value without needing praise. Lao's identity doesn't come from fighting against his role; it comes from peacefully accepting it, having firm inner limits, and being a grown-up. In many ways, he is the quiet support that keeps the family together. And in that quiet, he has discovered his voice—not just for himself, but also for the people he loves.

4.24 Agency and Motivation

4.24.1 Finds Peace in Structure and Routine

Lao's days start before the world wakes up. He doesn't hurry; he goes with the flow. He made a rhythm not only to stay alive, but also to keep himself together. For someone who has to keep a household running smoothly, chaos is the real enemy. Lao understood early on that he didn't have to make significant moves or win a lot of games to be strong. He only had to keep everything in order every day. “Kada morning, nagaprepay ko ug pamahaw... ako pa mupukaw sa ila.” (Every morning, I prepare breakfast... I'm also the one who wakes them up.)

Lao finds freedom in this tiny habit. Waking up his siblings, making their meals, going to work, and fitting in extra hours and side jobs are all things he does repeatedly, but they are never thoughtless. Every action has a purpose. He keeps things under control in a life that could easily get out of hand through his quiet actions.

Lao doesn't give up, even when he feels like he's about to crack from tiredness. He leans into structure instead. He admits, “Usahay, kahalakon ko sa kakapoy, pero kailangan man kayanon.” (Sometimes I cry from exhaustion, but I have to endure.) It's not a call for help; it's a release, and then it's back to normal. For Lao, structure is more than simply a routine; it's a way to deal with things, a shield, and even a prayer.

Weekends don't provide you a break; they only give you a different schedule, like doing laundry, cleaning, and sometimes driving a motorcycle. “Kapoy jud kadalasan akong adlaw, maong halos wala nako kabalo unsaon pag-enjoy sa akong life.” (Most days are so tiring that I barely remember how to enjoy life.) But he never expresses this in a mean way. There is a feeling of acceptance instead. Lao has made serenity out of doing the same thing over and over again and safety out of knowing what will happen.

He even employs routine to protect his feelings. He doesn't go in circles. He thinks. He calculates. “Ako jud ginahuna-huna na bawal jud mawala akong trabaho.” (I always remind myself that I must not lose my job.) That one thought controls what he does, how much energy he spends, and the connections he decides to put off for now.

Lao's drive doesn't come from ambition or praise. It comes from need, is improved by routine, and is

kept going by love. He doesn't go after the unusual; instead, he carefully constructs the commonplace until it becomes his safe place. Lao finds clarity in the cycle of job, home, budgeting, and sacrifice. He doesn't just get through it; he plans, adapts, and in that, he finds serenity.

Table 6: Narratives of Van Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Adjusts after father's decreased work. Middle: Works around routines. End: Finds meaning in routine.
Themes & Meaning-Making	Routine as sacrifice; gratitude in silence; invisible labor.
Tone & Voice	Mild, devoted, self-contained.
Identity Construction	Faithful helper; non-confrontational.
Agency & Motivation	Motivated by care and faith.
Overall Narrative Theme	Spiritualized service and sacrifice, where silence and routine become forms of love.

4.25 Narratives of Silent Devotion and Daily Grace

Van's narrative isn't loud. It doesn't come with a lot of noise or significant announcements. Instead, it creeps, like how she moves through her home before the sun rises—preparing food, folding clothes, checking if everyone else is okay. For her, service is not a job; it's a calling. She doesn't need to be complimented; just knowing that her family is nourished and that the day goes well is enough of a reward.

She doesn't say she's strong, but it's evident from the way she lives her life that she is. She gets up early and does work with her hands before going to work for other people. She comes home and starts over, not expecting anyone to notice. This is how she moves: steady, quiet, and full of significance. “Wala ko nag-ingon nga ako ang pinakakusgan, pero kabalo ko nga kinahanglan ko nila.” (I don't say that I'm the strongest, but I know they need me.)

There is spiritual clarity in her stillness. Van's work is more than just a job; it's a way to worship. A method to show someone you love them without saying it: cooking every meal, saving every peso, and giving up comfort so that someone else might have tranquility. She doesn't resent her sacrifices; she honors them. Even when she's tired, she gives the same care every day. “Usahay, gusto ko mutubag. Gusto ko mosulti nga kapoy na ko. Pero dili man ko gusto nga mabati nila nga pabug-at ko.” (Sometimes, I want to speak up. I want to say I'm exhausted, but I don't want them to feel like I'm a burden.)

Her quiet here isn't repression; it's love. She does this to keep the people she loves safe, even if it means sacrificing her peace. In church sermons, Van's spirituality is not just about talking. Instead, it is lived out in the hallways of her home, the back room of her employment, and in muttered prayers between paydays. Her tale shows that not all sacrifices are significant. It can be small but repetitive at times. It

can be hard to see. But it is always holy. She has learned to discover meaning in the everyday: "Kung makita nako sila nga okay, mura pud kog nakaginhawa." (When I see them, okay, I feel like I can breathe too.)

She gets that breath and relief as a reward. It doesn't matter. It's not clapping. The soul's faint sigh whispers, "This love, this work, is worth it." In Van's story, routine becomes a prayer, and stillness becomes her most holy language. She doesn't need to be seen to feel whole. God watches for her. That's all she needs

4.26 Narrative Structure

4.26.1 Beginning: Adjusts After Father's Decreased Work

At first, Van didn't plan to be the family's primary source of support. But life went on without her approval. When her father's body began to slow down, when his strength no longer matched the labor demanded by their livelihood, she quietly stepped forward. Nobody told her she had to. But the gaps were getting bigger, and she decided to fill them. "Sa una, si Papa jud ang pinaka-kusgan. Pero karun, makita nako nga dali na siya kapoyon. Dili na pareha sauna." ("Before, Papa was the strongest. But now, I see he gets tired easily. He's not like he used to be.")

She didn't say anything. She just changed her routine by getting up earlier, doing things more quickly, and thinking about more than just herself. She took on the duty with grace, even though it was new and weighty.

4.26.2 Middle: Works Around Routines

Van established a rhythm in the middle of her journey. She lived her life based on what other people needed. Her weekdays were lengthy but predictable: work, go home, do chores, and repeat. She didn't feel like she was getting a break on the weekends. But there were chances to do what was left to do. "Kung dili ko magprepare, walay mulihok. Kung wala ko, murag moguba ang tibuok adlaw." ("If I don't prepare, no one moves. If I'm not there, it's like the whole day falls apart.")

She had a lot of things to do all the time. She was tired some days. She cried in private some days. But most days, she just kept going. It was comforting to know what to do next and where to go next. The hard habit became her quiet friend.

4.26.3 End: Finds Meaning in Routine

Van eventually started to see meaning in the repetition. What other people might think is normal, she thought, was essential. For her, getting up early to cook, folding her mother's clothes, and making sure the power bill was paid on time were all ways she showed her love. "Dili man kinahanglan nga makabalo sila sa tanan nakong gibuhat. Basta makita nako nga okay sila, okay ra pud ko." ("They don't have to know everything I do. As long as I see that they're okay, I'm okay too.")

She understood that she didn't need to do great things to feel happy. Her life became a moving prayer, and regularity became a way to show she cared. Her hands moved because she remembered, and her heart loved because she had a goal. What used to feel weighty suddenly felt like devotion. And with

that, Van found her serenity.

4.27 Themes and Meaning-Making

4.27.1 Routine as Sacrifice

For Van, routine was more than just a schedule; it was how she gave. She woke up before anybody else, usually without an alarm, and the rest of the day went like a screenplay she had learned out of love, not choice. "Kung dili ko mulihok, walay mokaon, walay molimpyo, walay mulihok." ("If I don't move, no one eats, no one cleans, no one does anything.")

Every time she did anything repeatedly, like cleaning clothes, making meals, or budgeting money that was never enough, it became an offering. She didn't want people to clap for her. She hardly ever talked about it, though. But every little thing she did, even if no one noticed, was a part of her. She didn't give from her abundance; she showed from what little she had left. And that made her daily life a quiet but great sacrifice.

4.27.2 Gratitude in Silence

Van never wanted to be recognized. In truth, the stillness was her way of saying "thank you" for what she still had: her family, her job, and her strength to keep going. "Dili ko kinahanglan pasalamatan. Basta makita nako nga okay sila, okay ra pud ko." ("I don't need to be thanked. As long as I see they're okay, I'm OK too.")

She didn't celebrate herself, but she was thankful for being needed. She wasn't happy because others noticed her; she was pleased because she knew her mother had medicine, the lights stayed on, and her family could sleep well. She didn't say thank you out loud; it was in the way she moved through each day, steady and reliable.

4.27.3 Invisible Labor

People rarely praised Van's work. Most of what she did went unnoticed, was assumed, or was forgotten. But she kept doing it, not for attention but to stay committed and for love. "Usahay ganahan ko mutago, kay wala man sila kabalo kapila ko kahalak sa kakapoy." ("Sometimes I want to hide, because they don't know how often I cry from exhaustion.")

This work, which was not seen or paid for, was what held her family together. It changed who she was, even though other people couldn't see it. She was no longer merely the youngest; she was now the one everyone could count on.

She found more than just acknowledgment in this invisibility; she found purpose. She was the quiet force behind every calm morning, every full plate, and every payment that was paid. She knew they needed her, even if they never acknowledged it. And she decided to stay.

4.28 Tone and Voice

4.28.1 Mild

Van's voice is like a gentle stream: always there, steady, and soothing. She talks about emotionally difficult things without being theatrical or complaining. The way she speaks shows that she has learnt

to deal with her problems without getting angry, choosing kindness over anger. "Okay, ra man ko, basta sila okay." ("I'm okay, as long as they're okay.")

She doesn't sound rushed or pushy. Even when she speaks about tiredness, it comes in sighs rather than storms. This calmness is not a sign of weakness; it is how she has decided to deal with the mental and physical stress of running her home. Her voice sounds like someone who has learned to find strength in silence rather than viewing it as a sign of weakness. "Di ko musaba kung kapoy nako. Dili man sad kinahanglan masayod sila pirmi." ("I don't say anything when I'm tired. They don't always have to know.")

It's not about keeping things quiet; it's about keeping them safe. She keeps her family safe from her tiredness since she thinks that love is best demonstrated via serenity, not stress.

4.28.2 Devoted

Van's every gesture shows her devotion, and her speech reflects that sense of commitment. She doesn't wait for someone to ask her to help; she does her rituals with a kind of sacred rigor. Her dedication is not apparent, but it is clear in everything she says and does. "Dili nako ginapafeel nga napugos ko. Gusto lang jud nako mutabang." ("I don't make it seem like I was forced. I just want to help.")

There is no regret in her tone. Instead, it shows quiet acceptance, maybe even thanks. For her, service isn't a business deal; it's an act of love. She doesn't see her responsibilities as something she has to do; she sees them as methods to demonstrate passion for the people who reared her. Her devotion doesn't show in big, dramatic acts of sacrifice, but in the small, everyday things she does to be there for others, encourage them, and be patient. "Basta kabalo ko na maka-kaon sila ug naa silay tambal, ana lang. Kontento nako." ("As long as I know they can eat and have their medicine, that's enough for me.")

4.28.3 Self-contained

Van doesn't show her pain or stress on the outside. Even when the weight she carries gets heavy, her voice stays calm and controlled. This self-containment is a way for her to deal with things and a sign of her strength. She keeps the peace in the house, which means she keeps her personal feelings to herself. "Usahay, hilak nalang ko sa CR para walay makakita." ("Sometimes, I just cry in the bathroom so no one sees.")

It is not shameful to hide tears; it's safe. She keeps her feelings to herself so her family doesn't have to. Her voice doesn't plead for help; it gives comfort, even when she needs it. She doesn't talk about her wants very often, but when she does, she does it softly, never with a demand. "Gusto ko unta makapalit para sa akong kaugalingon, pero dili siya priority." ("I wish I could buy something for myself, but it's not a priority.")

Van shows us that strength may be found in silence through the use of a soft voice. That love doesn't always shout or shine. It sometimes sits quietly at the table, makes sure everyone eats, and then goes to bed last.

4.29 Identity Construction

4.29.1 Faithful Helper

Van doesn't think of herself as the head of the family; she thinks of herself as its continual support. She doesn't see her worth in power or recognition; instead, she finds it in helping others, being reliable, and turning up every day without being asked. "Basta kabalo ko na maka-kaon sila ug naa silay tambal, ana lang. Kontento nako." ("As long as I know they can eat and have their medicine, that's enough for me.")

This silent promise suggests that you have a strong sense of who you are based on loyalty and faithfulness. Van doesn't need big things to make her feel significant; she feels whole when she thinks she is contributing. Being a dedicated assistant is not a job she reluctantly takes on; it's who she believes she was meant to be, especially after her father's health got worse. "Gikapoy ko usahay pero kinahanglan gihapon mulihok." ("I get tired sometimes, but I still need to keep going.")

Being needed is a big part of who she is, and so is being someone who doesn't give up even when no one is watching. She doesn't talk loudly or try to be the center of attention, but the family depends on her, and she accepts her role with quiet pride.

4.29.2 non-confrontational

Van doesn't complain or dispute. She avoids tense situations because she wants to keep the peace, not because she is weak. She keeps her anger and irritation to herself, even from the people she serves. "Di ko musaba kung kapoy nako. Dili man sad kinahanglan masayod sila pirmi." ("I don't say anything when I'm tired. They don't always have to know.")

She would rather be quiet than fight. She would rather have peace than attention. This non-confrontational demeanor isn't a sign of passivity; it's a choice she made to protect her connections and keep her family from having to deal with extra stress. When things are too hard, she doesn't get angry. She quietly pulls away, cries in the restroom, and then goes on with her life. "Usahay, hilak nalang ko sa CR para walay makakita." ("Sometimes, I just cry in the bathroom so no one sees.")

She is strong when she is quiet. She doesn't want to face it because she cares. She keeps her family safe from not only poverty, but also guilt, humiliation, and stress. This is how Van builds her sense of self: not loud or demanding, but steady and softspoken, like a quiet warrior covered in kindness.

4.30 Agency and Motivation

4.30.1 Care

Care is at the heart of every choice Van makes. She doesn't make a big deal out of her sacrifices or make a lot of noise about them. Everything she does is for the sake of her family. The thought of their comfort keeps her going, even when she is physically fatigued. "Basta kabalo ko nga kompleto ilang kaon, maka-inom si Papa sa tambal, okay na ko." ("As long as I know they've had a full meal and Papa has taken his medicine, I'm okay.")

She doesn't have to think about whether or not to help; it's just what her heart tells her to do every day. Her concern is what drives her. It shows in how she changes her plans, skips outings, or maintains working even when she's tired. It's never about getting something. It's about making life easier for the people she cares about. "Dili man kinahanglan ako pirmi ang makita. Basta makatabang ko, okay ra." ("I don't need to be seen all the time. As long as I can help, I'm okay with it.")

Even when life seems to be going in circles or when her own needs are ignored, care is always what drives her. She doesn't want to manage other people; she just wants to help them out in a quiet, steady way

4.30.2 Faith

Van doesn't often talk about her faith, but her actions show that she has a strong belief in God and the importance of her actions. She gives up some control over her routine and trusts that the sacrifices she makes now will pay off. "Muampo ra ko pirimi na makapadayon mi, na naa lang jud mutabang sa taas." ("I always pray that we can continue, that someone from above will help us.")

Her spirituality isn't loud or flashy. It's in everything she does, from her early mornings to her solitary work to her patience when things are tough. She believes that if she does her part, God will somehow do His. And she keeps going even when things don't get better immediately. She only asks for what she needs to keep going. "Lisod usahay pero mutuo lang ko na naa juy rason ngano ako ni gihatag." ("It's hard sometimes, but I just believe there's a reason why this was given to me.")

Van doesn't just always talk about her faith; she walks it. And her shield from all the negativity is her prayers. When her body is exhausted, it gives her strength, and when her heart is softly hurting, it provides her peace. She is doing it all, not just to stay alive, but because she wants to do it; it's a spiritual kind of love that comes from trust and doing things for others without saying anything.

Table 7: Narratives of Ryan Assuming the Role of the Breadwinner

Element	Narrative Analysis
Narrative Structure	Beginning: Becomes sole support after siblings leave. Middle: Carries burden quietly. End: Finds peace in purpose.
Themes & Meaning-Making	Internal struggle; delayed dreams; unseen labor.
Tone & Voice	Vulnerable but brave.
Identity Construction	Matures beyond age, resilient provider.
Agency & Motivation	Quietly bears burden out of choice.
Overall Narrative Theme	Growth under pressure: Becoming the family's lifeline through introspection and unspoken love.

4.31 Narratives of Becoming the Family's Lifeline Through Introspection and Love

Ryan is the youngest in his family, but he has the most responsibility. He had to grow up fast after he graduated, since he had to be the earner. He didn't have time to enjoy being young. Ryan doesn't talk about his trips, hobbies, or love life like other individuals his age do. Instead, he worries about paying the bills, getting his parents' medicine, and making sure they have enough food every day. "Sa mata sa uban, kusgan ko ug responsable, pero sa tinuod lang, pirimi ko'g kapoyon, maluya, ug usahay

muhilak sa hilom” (“In the eyes of others, I seem strong and responsible, but the truth is, I’m always tired, weak, and sometimes I cry in silence”). He never got to enjoy being the youngest; instead, he became the family's rock while they were having trouble standing.

The stress hurt his health as much as his feelings. He has migraines, feels tired all the time, and can't sleep. The continual worry about running out of money makes things worse. He still doesn't talk about his anguish because he doesn't want to bother anyone. “Lisod pud nga wala koy kapahungawan... akong mga gibati, akong ginatago lang” (“It’s hard not having an outlet... so I just keep my feelings to myself”). He deals with things by writing in a journal, praying in his room, or listening to music. These little things are lifelines for Ryan. Even in moments of exhaustion, he reminds himself, “Kung ako mismo matumba, walay mutindog para sa akong pamilya” (“If I fall, no one else will stand up for my family”).

Ryan gave up a lot of things—his job, his friends, and even sleep—so that his family could stay alive. He often wonders how much longer he can live like this “Usahay, makapangutana ko kung hangtod kanus-a ko magpabiling ani—gasakripisyo, gapugong sa kaugalingong damgo” (“Sometimes I ask myself how long I’ll have to stay like this— sacrificing and holding back my own dreams”). But he still finds purpose in the quiet of his fight. He knows that his love isn't loud; it's shown by little things like skipping meals, making sacrifices every day, and crying in secret. Ryan's agony is absolute, but so is his goal.

Ryan has become a powerful, wise, and kind person, even after everything that has happened to him. He says it's not easy and that he often feels alone with people his age, but he chooses to keep going. “Ginapalig-on nako akong kaugalingon kada adlaw, bisan pa sa hilom nga paghilak” (“I strengthen myself every day, even through silent tears”). He has matured not only because he had to, but also because he wanted to. And in the quiet times of tiredness and whispered prayers, Ryan has changed from being the youngest child to being the steady light in a family that was previously darkened by trouble.

4.32 Narrative Structure

4.32.1 Beginning: Becomes Sole Support After Siblings Leave

Ryan's adventure started because of things that happened, not because he wanted to. He never thought that, as the youngest in the family, he would be the one everyone would rely on. But life had other ideas. “Ako ra ang nakahuman ug kolehiyo sa among pamilya” (“I’m the only one in the family who finished college”), he shared, a simple truth that shaped everything else.

Ryan, who had just graduated from college, took on a job that was more than he was ready for when his elder siblings could no longer help his aging parents. The change happened quickly. He had to grow up quickly from being a student to becoming a provider. “Pagkahuman pa lang nako og graduate, trabaho dayon ang gisudlan para makatabang sa pamilya” (“Right after I graduated, I immediately started working to help the family”).

4.32.2 Middle: Carries Burden Quietly

Ryan didn't grumble as his responsibilities grew. He carried the burden with a calm strength that few

people saw. Ryan was paying bills and buying medicine while his friends were figuring out who they were. “Pirmi ko’g kapoyon, maluya, ug usahay muhilak sa hilom” (“I’m always tired, weak, and sometimes I cry in silence”), he admitted.

His heart hurt not only because of tension, but also because he was alone. “Lisod pud nga wala koy kapahungawan... akong mga gibati, akong ginatago lang” (“It’s hard not having a release... I just keep my feelings to myself”). He continued going even when his body started to hurt—he got migraines, was tired, and couldn’t sleep. He couldn’t rest. “Kung ako matumba, walay mutindog para sa akong pamilya” (“If I collapse, no one else will stand up for my family”). He made silent sacrifices every day, like skipping meals, ignoring dreams, and swallowing tears.

4.32.3 End: Find peace in purpose

Ryan started to discover purpose in the depths of his tiredness. Not in big wins, but in little ones, like having a supper ready or seeing his parents smile. “Akong ginapilit nga tan-awon kini nga usa ka halangdong papel” (“I try to view this as an honorable role”), he said. His purpose gave him strength. Every little thing he did to show he cared, like working long hours, giving up sleep, or putting his aspirations on hold, was a way for him to say “I care.”

He held on to optimism through it all. “Ginapalig-on nako akong kaugalingon kada adlaw, bisan pa sa hilom nga paghilak” (“I strengthen myself every day, even through silent tears”). Ryan didn’t simply carry the family’s weight; he also provided them with a reason to have faith again. And by doing this, he found his light.

4.33 Themes and Meaning Making

4.33.1 Internal Struggle

Ryan looks peaceful on the outside, but his heart is fighting in silence. Many people might think he was free from stress because he was the youngest, but that’s not the case. “Sa mata sa uban, kusgan ko ug responsable, pero sa tinuod lang, pirmi ko’g kapoyon, maluya, ug usahay muhilak sa hilom” (“In the eyes of others, I seem strong and responsible, but in truth, I’m often tired, weak, and sometimes I cry in silence”).

He is strong not because things are easy, but because they are hard. He has to fight with himself every day to meet his demands and those of his family. He confesses, “Maka-feel ko og kabalaka, pressure, ug usahay murag walay padulngan ang akong kaugalingong kinabuhi” (“I feel anxiety, pressure, and sometimes like my life has no direction”). But he keeps going, not because he doesn’t feel the anguish, but because he chooses to rise above it.

4.33.2 Delayed Dreams

Ryan’s dreams have taken a back seat, not because he isn’t ambitious, but because he loves his family so much. He has a degree, but he can’t use it to its full potential. “Mura kog nagdaku sa kalibutan nga akong wala gipili” (“It feels like I grew up in a world I didn’t choose”), he reflects.

There were job opportunities and paths that promised to help him grow in his field, but he turned them down. “Daghan kaayo kog gisalibay nga oportunidad alang lang sa among pamilya” (“I’ve let go of

many opportunities for the sake of my family”). He could have gotten jobs that aligned with his passion, that would have helped him grow as a person, but he said no, because he needed a job that would sustain the needs of his family.

4.33.3 Unseen Labor

There is a type of work that doesn't get praised: work done in quiet, without breaks, and frequently without appreciation. Every day, Ryan lives this reality. “Lisod pud nga wala koy kapahungawan... akong mga gibati, akong ginatago lang” (“It’s hard having no outlet... I keep my feelings to myself”). People don't often recognize his sacrifices. It's not that they don't care; it's just that they don't see how much he has to deal with. Even his health is getting worse. “Ang akong lawas murag ni-give up na usahay, pero ako lang gihapon pugson” (“Sometimes, my body feels like it’s giving up, but I still force myself to keep going”).

But he doesn't seek praise for doing all of this. Love, not recognition, is what motivates him. “Bisan kapoy na, ang akong kasinatian nagtudlo nako nga lig-on diay ko” (“Even when I’m tired, my experience has taught me that I am strong”). His work may not be visible, but it is imperative since he is moving his family forward with each weight he carries.

4.34 Tone and Voice

4.34.1 Vulnerable but Brave

Ryan's voice is full of quiet suffering, but it never seems like he's giving up. His voice shakes, yet it never goes away. There is a hushed roar of might behind every soft-spoken syllable. “Pirmi ko’g kapoyon, maluya, ug usahay muhilak sa hilom” (“I often feel tired, weak, and sometimes cry in silence”). He says he doesn't want pity; he wants to finally let go of what he's been hiding for so long. His voice doesn't sound angry; it sounds like the honest pain of a life that ended too soon.

His vulnerability isn't a sign of weakness; it's a sign of strength. He says he feels anxious, tired, and lost, but he still gets up. “Usahay, murag ako ra angnagsagubang sa tanang problema, bisan daghan mi sa pamilya” (“Sometimes, it feels like I’m carrying all the problems, even though we are many in the family”). His remarks are sad, but never angry. He chooses to be kind instead of complaining, even while he's hurting inside. His tone sounds like someone who has sobbed behind closed doors and then acted like nothing happened the next day.

Ryan's fearlessness shines through in the middle of his most vulnerable thoughts. “Kung ako mismo matumba, walay mutindog para sa akong pamilya” (“If I collapse, no one else will stand for my family”). This is the kind of heroism that doesn't get a lot of attention. He is scared, yet he chooses love above fear. He is quite tired, but he still comes. He gives up things without saying anything, yet he talks kindly about the people he gives up things for. His voice may tremble with tiredness, but it never lets go of its purpose.

There is a grace at the heart of Ryan's voice that only the very hurt can carry. “Ginapalig-on nako akong kaugalingon kada adlaw, bisan pa sa hilom nga paghilak” (“I strengthen myself every day, even through silent cries”). He isn't loud. He doesn't yell about how much pain he's in. His voice, even though it's soft, grabs your attention because it speaks to so many young people who have had to grow

up too quickly, love too fiercely, and carry too much. Ryan's voice is both soft and loud. Yes, vulnerable, but also quite brave.

4.35 Identity Construction

4.35.1 Matures Beyond Age

Ryan didn't have the chance to grow at his own speed. Life forced him to grow up too quickly. "Sa akong kaedad unta, dapat ga-enjoy pa ko sa pagkabatan-on, pero napugos ko nga mamature dayon kay walay lain musalo sa among kalisod" ("At my age, I should be enjoying my youth, but I was forced to mature early because no one else could carry our burdens"). This isn't expressed with anger; it's said with the clarity of someone who knows what it is to become a man not by choice but by necessity. Ryan talks about bills, medicine, and how to stay alive, while his friends chat about hopes and freedom. His sense of self was not based only on being independent, but also on making sacrifices. He takes on responsibilities that are usually for older people, yet he does them with grace. "Wala koy kahigayunan nga mahimong 'bunso' sa ilang panan-aw" ("I never had the chance to be the 'youngest' in their eyes"). Ryan is still seen as youthful by the world, but his experiences have made him much older in spirit. His birth order no longer defines who he is; his ability to keep the family going does.

4.35.2 Resilient Provider

Ryan has been the core of a strong provider within this weight. He doesn't break down under pressure, even when it hurts him. "Kung ako mohunong, walay lain makatabang" ("If I stop, no one else can help"). He doesn't define himself by what he doesn't have; he defines himself by how he continues going. His strength is strong but silent. He becomes the home's dependable backbone, not because he wanted to, but because no one else could.

Ryan's sense of self doesn't come from prosperity or comfort, but from hard work and dedication. "Para sa akong pamilya, bisan unsa ka lisod, akong dawaton" ("For my family, no matter how hard it gets, I will accept it"). He is more than just an earner; he is a selfless builder of love, stability, and meaning. Ryan is more than simply a survivor in the end. He is a grown man carved out of a boy, forged by hardship, held together by quiet hope.

4.36 Agency and Motivation

4.36.1 Quietly Bears Burden Out of Choice

Ryan's life isn't like other stories about young adults. There are no free-spirited adventures or selfish dreams. But what makes his narrative so interesting is that he carries his burdens not as punishment, but as a personal choice. He has quietly chosen to love. "Bisan naa na ko'y mga health warning signs, usahay akong ginabalewala kay mas ginauna nako ang tambal sa akong mama kaysa sa check-up para sa akong kaugalingon" ("Even though I already have health warning signs, I sometimes ignore them because I prioritize my mother's medicine over my own checkup"). It's a complicated situation, but he does it with his eyes open because he cares, not because he has to.

He doesn't talk a lot about the things he's given up. Ryan doesn't want praise or sympathy. "Para makaya nako ang emosyonal nga pressure, akong gipili nga maghilom kaysa magreklamo" ("To cope

with emotional pressure, I choose to stay quiet rather than complain”). That silence isn't a sign of weakness; it's his way of being strong. He finds his control and a sense of ownership over his situation in that silence. He may not have chosen the problem, but he does pick how to deal with it.

Ryan keeps coming back, even if he's tired, because he wants to. “Bisan kapoy, ginapugos nako akong kaugalingon kay kabalo ko nga nagsalig sila nako” (“Even when tired, I force myself to keep going because I know they depend on me”). This isn't forced martyrdom; it's love in action. Ryan doesn't just put up with it; he chooses to put up with it because he believes in what he's doing. He is not only driven by pressure but also by a strong sense of purpose and the confidence that his sacrifices are not in vain. He remembers why he keeps going in the calm times, which are uncommon and short-lived moments he makes for himself. “Ginaremind nako akong kaugalingon nga kini nga sakripisyo temporary ra” (“I remind myself that this sacrifice is only temporary”). That's what keeps him grounded. Ryan's drive doesn't come from big goals or rewards. It is a steady fire that was constructed out of love and lit by hope. He is not stuck; he is rooted. And from that strong base, he marches forward—not with noise, but with silent might.

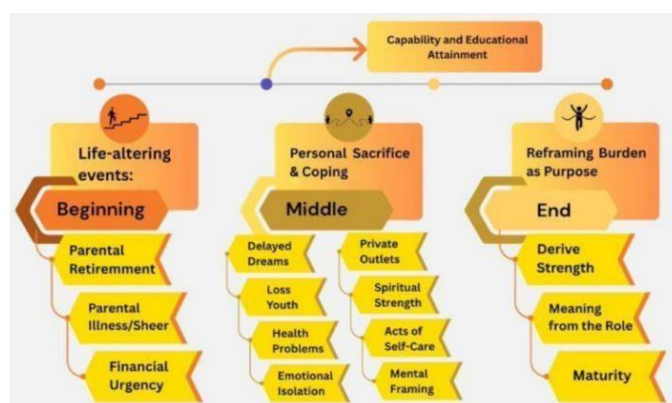


Figure 2: Murray's Narrative Analysis – Overall Narrative of Youngest Breadwinners

4.37 Narratives of Love, Cultural Expectation, and Personal Mission

This narrative is about young children who grow up too quickly but rise with grace, turning cultural expectations and personal struggles into silent courage. They don't get through terrible times by running away; they get through them by facing them head-on, with structure, discipline, and emotional knowledge that goes beyond their years. People often think that the youngest members of a family are the most sheltered. Yet, these people prove that wrong by becoming the leading providers, caretakers, and emotional support for their families.

Their journeys are complete with internal conflict as they deal with unspoken sacrifices and hidden feelings. They often put their goals on hold, not because they failed, but because they chose to serve something bigger than themselves. They keep doing their jobs even though few people notice them. They do it out of love and a sense of duty that makes them more mature than their age.

Unseen work shapes their daily lives—work done not simply with their hands but also with their hearts, frequently out of sight. They work quietly in the background, putting their needs second and their

hopes on hold. But this silence shows an incredible strength. They have a strength that is not loud or praised, but is always there and important.

Even though their jobs are complex, these young breadwinners show that they are always motivated and in control of their own lives. They have to make hard choices and stick to them with fortitude, not because it's easy, but because they believe in the future they are making for their loved ones. Their stories aren't about big acts of love; they're about consistent, persistent love. This makes them silent heroes in a world that frequently doesn't perceive the kind of strength that doesn't ask to be seen.

4.38 Narrative Structure

4.38.1 Beginning: Life-Altering Events

The participants, who were the youngest in their families, slowly or unexpectedly took on the position of breadwinner because of life-changing circumstances like their parents retiring, being sick, or the household income suddenly dropping. They didn't choose to take on this position; they had to. When older siblings moved out, got married, or were no longer available, the youngest children quietly stepped up and became the unexpected backbone of their homes. For many people, the change started shortly after they graduated. The relief of finishing school rapidly evolved into the strain of being the sole hope for the family. At one point, they may have been seen as "the baby" of the family, but they had to grow up quickly because of what happened.

4.38.2 Middle: Personal Sacrifice While Developing Coping Mechanisms

They entered a time when they had to make personal sacrifices, like balancing employment, family responsibilities, and sometimes unsaid emotional difficulties. Their days were long and hard since they had to take care of the house, budget their little salaries, and keep their wants in check. People put off or discreetly gave up on their dreams to take care of their current requirements. People's social lives vanished, and times of rest were rare. Even yet, people found ways to cope with their feelings, such as praying in quiet, writing in journals, taking time to mourn alone, or finding little comfort in music or trusted friends. They learned how to deal with stress and change their expectations, not because they had to, but because no one else would. The fight made them more emotionally mature and more understanding of others, but it often hurt their health.

4.38.3 End: Reframing Burden as Purpose

Even though they were tired, sore, and emotionally drained, the people who took part found significance in their role. As time went on, they started to see their sacrifices as acts of love and strength. The duty didn't feel like punishment anymore; it felt like a gentle calling, a gift they gave gladly for the people they loved the most. They didn't make the bad times seem romantic, but they handled them with elegance. They learned that their identity was based on their character and strength, not on their age or position. They grew emotionally wise, driven by purpose, and quietly proud as they carried the weight of their families. Even though their paths are complex, they travel them with pride. They are no longer just the youngest child; they are the strongest pillar.

4.39 Themes and Meaning Making

The most striking thing that runs across all the stories is a deep and unchanging love for family that guides even the worst choices. These youngest children didn't want to be the breadwinners just because they wanted to or because society told them to. They did it out of love. They showed a kind of love that goes beyond words by being quiet, working long hours, and choosing to stay when they could have fled. Their regular actions—paying bills, buying medicine, missing meals, and putting off their dreams—become their way of showing they care. In this manner, their sacrifices aren't hollow or angry; they're full of peaceful dedication.

Resilience through sacrifice is at the center of their quest. They all go through tiredness, missed chances, and feeling alone, yet they keep going with determination. This strength isn't loud or showy. It can be seen in simple acts of survival, like keeping the lights on, finding calm in prayer, and staying strong even when you feel weak. They trade rest for responsibility and youth for duty, but they keep going, not as victims but as strong, grounded people who know how heavy what they carry is. They become versions of themselves they never thought they could be: mature, disciplined, and emotionally intelligent.

They are always trying to find a balance between duty and self, between who they are and what they have to do. They don't deny their suffering; they rebuild it. They find significance in their struggles by seeing them as service, love, and even a calling. Being the breadwinner, even when it's hard, becomes a badge of honor. They claim the role not because they had to, but because they chose to stay when it counted most. Responsibility isn't simply a duty; it also shows who you are, how strong you are, and what your fundamental cultural and personal beliefs are. They turn quiet pain into something good and helpful through this process.

4.40 Tone and Voice

The tone that comes through from all the participants is one of raw honesty and quiet strength. Their reflections are filled with emotional clarity—pain is not dramatized, but acknowledged with a sense of dignity. You don't need to add anything; the weight of their stories speaks for itself. They show signs of tiredness, doubt, anxiety, and even anger at times, but they always have a sense of responsibility. Even when you're tired, there's always a voice of purpose. Their statements show a level of maturity that doesn't match their age but does reflect the life they've lived.

Even though they have a lot on their plates, there is a spiritual and emotional faith that keeps them going. Each voice has strength that comes from terrible times, whether it's faith in God, hope for their family's health, or belief in a brighter tomorrow. Some people speak with cautious hope, while others speak with a somber determination. But they all have a deep understanding of themselves and a strength that turns weakness into quiet fearlessness. Their tone shows not only the sorrow they are feeling right now, but also the person they have become because of it.

4.41 Identity Construction

The people in their stories don't fit the usual picture of the "bunso" as a spoiled or carefree child. Life didn't give them the chance to be lazy. Instead, they went through a surprise yet powerful change: they

went from being the youngest to being the strongest. They were the people everyone looked to for help—the decision-makers, the protectors, and the quiet pillars that held the family together. They learned to put their age aside and take on roles that are usually only given to older people. This changed not only their duties but also how they regarded themselves.

This change made their identities more solid and meaningful. They didn't see themselves as victims of circumstance; instead, they saw themselves as selected vessels of strength. They were quietly proud of their maturity and learned to be leaders not by having titles but by doing things. They took care of their families' needs and their mental health, providing stability even when their hearts were tired. By doing this, they changed what it meant to be "the youngest." Instead of being the most reliant, they are now the most reliable.

4.42 Agency and Motivation

Even if the participants' situations were urgent and complete with responsibility, their choices were never just reflexes; they were made with love and loyalty. They didn't just give in to pressure; they took on the position of breadwinner with a strong will. They felt empowered because they were sure that someone had to stand up, and they chose to be that person. They were not only okay with the weight they carried, but they were also happy about it. This was because every choice they made was based on a desire to repay the care they had received and make sure no one in the family fell through the cracks.

It wasn't just about staying alive for them; it was about finding meaning. They found meaning in minor wins, like a supper on the table, a bill paid, or a parent's comfort, even when they were tired and things were taking too long. They didn't see their problems as hurdles; they regarded them as steps. Each sacrifice was made on purpose, and each burden was clear. They didn't have to be strong; they chose to be, quietly and consistently, out of love that spoke louder than complaints.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings, the conclusions drawn of the major findings, the conclusions drawn from the results, and the recommendations formulated based on the study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The participants, who were the youngest in their families, gradually or unexpectedly took on the role of breadwinner as a result of life-changing events such as their parents retiring, being ill, or the household income suddenly reducing. They were forced to take on this stance; they did not choose it. When older siblings moved out, married, or became unavailable, the youngest children quietly stepped in and became the unexpected backbone of their families. Many folks experienced a transformation shortly after graduation. The relief of graduating from school quickly gave way to the strain of being the family's main hope. They may have been considered "the baby" of the family at one time, but what happened forced them to mature swiftly.

They entered a period when they had to make personal sacrifices, such as juggling work, family

commitments, and sometimes unacknowledged emotional troubles. Their days were long and arduous since they had to take care of the house, budget their small salaries, and put their desires on hold. They postponed or quietly abandoned their goals to meet their current needs. Their social lives vanished, and downtime was scarce. Despite this, they found ways to cope with their emotions, such as praying quietly, writing in journals, crying alone, or finding little comfort in music or trusted friends. They learnt how to cope with stress and adjust their expectations because no one else would. The struggle made them more emotionally mature and understanding of others, but it frequently harmed their health. Even though they were exhausted, sore, and emotionally drained, those who committed found meaning in their roles. They gradually came to view their sacrifices as acts of love and strength. The task no longer seemed like a punishment; instead, it felt like a gentle calling, a gift they happily delivered to the ones they loved most. They didn't make the challenging moments appear romantic, but they handled them with grace. They realized that their identity was determined by their character and strength, not by their age or position. As they carried the burden of their families, they became emotionally intelligent, purposeful, and quietly proud. Despite the difficulties of their paths, they travel them with pride. They are no longer the youngest child; they are the most critical pillar.

5.2 Conclusions

The narratives of the youngest breadwinners go against the firmly held societal expectation that age is linked to duty and abilities. One of the most surprising things this study found was that experience, not age, is what makes someone mature. People typically thought of these young people as "bunso" or those in need of care, but they became the strongest members of their families. This change in roles was more than just a change in responsibilities; it was a change in who they were. Their stories show that even the most unexpected family members can show courage, grace, and strength when life calls for it, breaking the stereotype that only the eldest should lead and make sacrifices.

Another deep insight is how much emotional work goes on behind the scenes. These children were in pain but didn't say anything because they didn't want their loved ones to worry anymore. Their means of coping, including praying, crying silently, writing in a journal, and listening to music for a short time, are not simply strategies to get through the day; they are also subtle techniques to protect themselves and control their emotions. This shows that they were emotionally intelligent not through school, but through hard times. Even if their bodies ached, their dreams were delayed, and they often felt hopeless, they found strength not in recognition but in the quiet satisfaction of doing their duty out of love.

This study shows the modest heroism that frequently goes unseen in Filipino homes. The sacrifices made by the people who took part were not about following rules; they were acts of agency. They didn't find significance by getting rid of their agony; they found it by going through it with a purpose. These people opted to offer their best for the people they love, even when they lost their freedom and future dreams. And in doing so, they learned something sacred: that love-based sacrifice can build homes and a stronger sense of self-worth.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the youngest breadwinners and to promote their well-being and long-term development.

First, young breadwinners themselves should be empowered through access to information, skill-building programs, and peer networks that affirm their efforts and provide emotional support. By connecting with others who share similar experiences, they may gain strength, encouragement, and a sense of belonging. These individuals must also be encouraged to advocate for their own needs and become active participants in shaping initiatives that affect them.

Second, it is recommended that mental health professionals design and deliver culturally sensitive and age-appropriate mental health services for young adult breadwinners. Interventions should focus on building resilience, managing stress, and providing emotional support to those who are navigating adult pressures at a young age. Community-based counseling programs and peer support groups can serve as accessible mental health platforms.

Third, families and communities must be encouraged to foster environments of empathy, open communication, and shared responsibility. Parents and guardians should be educated about the long-term risks associated with assigning heavy financial burdens to young family members. Community leaders and organizations can initiate support networks that offer practical assistance and emotional encouragement to the youngest breadwinners, while promoting education.

Fourth, employers and workforce development professionals are encouraged to recognize the unique experiences of the youngest breadwinners within the labor force. By tailoring job training, flexible work arrangements, and support services such as scholarships or mentorship programs, employers can contribute to both the personal growth and professional development of this demographic. Inclusive workforce development strategies must account for their dual roles as workers and youngest family members burdened with responsibility.

Fifth, it is strongly recommended that policymakers and advocacy groups develop and implement targeted policies that directly address the socio-economic conditions that force these individuals into premature financial responsibility. These policies should include poverty-reduction programs, livelihood support for families, and educational access initiatives to prevent these people from abandoning their further studies to work. As aligned with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), such interventions must prioritize sustainable family income generation to reduce the reliance on children as economic contributors.

Lastly, for future researchers, this study opens pathways for further exploration into the long-term outcomes of the youngest breadwinners. It is recommended that future studies examine how early

breadwinning influences educational attainment, career progression, mental health trajectories, and adult family roles. Longitudinal designs can offer deeper insights into the evolving experiences of this population, contributing valuable data for policy and program development.

In conclusion, these recommendations seek to transform the recognition of the youngest breadwinners from a narrative of survival into a catalyst for systemic change, guided by compassion, inclusivity, and social responsibility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Abrea, L., & Vargas, M. A. (2025). Demographic Variations in the Domains of Filipino Parentification Scale for College Students. *The Family Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807251343901>
- [2] Alkhalil, L. (2024, May 27). Everything You Should Know About Poverty in the Philippines the Borgen Project. *The Borgen Project*. <https://borgenproject.org/aboutpoverty-in-the-philippines/>
- [3] Al-Rifae, J., & Mukattash, E. (2025). The Economic Shock in Arab and African American Female Fiction: A Socio-Economic Reading of the Mother-Daughter Relationship. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(2), 606-614. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1502.30>
- [4] Alampay, L. P. (2024). Cultural values, parenting and child adjustment in the Philippines. *International Journal of Psychology*, 59(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.13117>
- [5] Alanazi, R., AlHugail, M., & Almeshary, T. (2023). What are the attitudes towards changing gender roles within the saudi family? *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 25(2), 1-12. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/whatare-attitudes-towards-changing-gender-roles/docview/2808678121/se-2> Alanazi, R., AlHugail, M., & Almeshary, T. (2023). What are the attitudes towards changing gender roles within the saudi family? *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 25(2), 1-12. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/whatare-attitudes-towards-changing-gender-roles/docview/2808678121/se-2>
- [6] Aldrin, T., & Sacristan (2020). Understanding the ABCDs of young adult breadwinning phenomenon: The Baseco experience. <https://www.pomsmeetings.org/ConfPapers/052/052-0125.pdf>
- [7] Allendorf, K. (2013). Going nuclear? family structure and young women's health in india, 1992-2006. *Demography*, 50(3), 853-80. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-012-0173-1>
- [8] American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. (2025). ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/journal/American-Journal-of-Orthopsychiatry-1939-0025?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19
- [9] American Psychological Association. (2024, May). Exploring the Mental Health Effects of poverty, hunger, and Homelessness on Children and Teens. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/povertyhunger-homelessness-children>

- [10] An, J., Zhu, X., Shi, Z., & An, J. (2024). A serial mediating effect of perceived family support on psychological well-being. *BMC Public Health*, 24(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-18476-z>
- [11] Anon, J. (2022). The key to change: Women's voice and influence. (n.d.). UN Women – Asia-Pacific. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/experts-take/2022/06/womens-voice-and-influence>
- [12] Anon, J. (2024). Turning Points In Women's History - 525 Words | Bartleby. (n.d.). [Www.bartleby.com](https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Turning-Points-In-Womens-History-PJA5PZXLH8V). Retrieved February 3, 2024, from <https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Turning-Points-In-Womens-History-PJA5PZXLH8V>
- [13] Ashworth, E., Putwain, D. W., McLoughlin, S., Saini, P., Chopra, J., Rosser, B., & Eames, C. (2022). Ordinary Magic in Extraordinary Circumstances: Factors Associated with Positive Mental Health Outcomes for Early Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Adversity and Resilience Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-022-00054-0>
- [14] Barnes, N. (2022, February 1). Career Development for Youth in Low-Income Communities Using Super's Model. [Www.ncda.org](https://www.ncda.org). https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/266334/_PA_RENT/CC_layout_details/false
- [15] Barredo, C. (2021). MB Throwback: Ang dahilan kung bakit nagpuntang Manila si Stephen | ABS-CBN Entertainment. ABS-CBN ENT. <https://ent.abs-cbn.com/magandangbuhay/videos/mb-throwback-stephen-tumayong-breadwinnerng-kanyang-pamilya-kahit-bunso-siya-318493>
- [16] Bartels, C., & Shupe, C. (2023). Drivers of participation elasticities across europe: Gender or earner role within the household? *International Tax and Public Finance*, 30(1), 167- 214. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-021-09711-z>
- [17] Battle, B. P. (2023). The carceral logic of parental responsibility. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 85(3), 679-700. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12902>
- [18] Blasi, M. D., Giardina, A., Giordano, C., Coco, G. L., Tosto, C., Billieux, J., & Schimmenti, A. (2019). Problematic video game use as an emotional coping strategy: Evidence from a sample of MMORPG gamers. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 8(1), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.8.2019.02>
- [19] Booth, J. W., & Neill, J. T. (2024). Coping strategies and the development of psychological resilience. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 20(1), 47–54. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03401002>
- [20] Botha, F., Deady, M., & Bower, M. (2024, July 16). Loneliness in the workplace is greatest among men with traditional views about being the breadwinner. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/loneliness-in-the-workplace-is-greatest-among-men-with-traditional-views-about-being-the-breadwinner-230535>
- [21] Brignoli, P. E. (2024, December 9). The power of chosen family: a lifeline when living abroad . [Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paola-elenabrignoli_the-power-of-chosen-family-a-lifeline-when-activity-7271846857163657216-). https://www.linkedin.com/posts/paola-elenabrignoli_the-power-of-chosen-family-a-lifeline-when-activity-7271846857163657216- E SGV

- [22] Bristol, J. (2023). Theorising fatherhood: Challenges and suggestions. (2023). Families, Relationships and Societies, 12(1), 49-49-59.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1332/204674321X16693961177375>
- [23] Busch, H., & Hofer, J. (2021). Generativity and Adult Development. Springer EBooks, 2004-2012. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22009-9_97
- [24] Bushell, M. G. (2022). No Time for Rest: An Exploration of Sleep and Social Harm in the North East Night-Time Economy (NTE). Critical Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-022-09655-8>
- [25] Camella Y. (2023, September 8). The Evolution of Family Dynamics in the Philippines. Camella Homes. <https://www.camella.com.ph/the-evolution-of-familydynamics-in-the-philippines/>
- [26] Cardona, Y. (2021, July 13). A Breadwinner At 19: What It's Like To Be Young And Your Family's Sole Provider | OneNews.PH. A Breadwinner at 19: What It's like to Be Young and Your Family's Sole Provider | OneNews.PH. <https://www.onenews.ph/articles/a-breadwinner-at-19-what-it-s-li-ke-to-be-youngand-your-family-s-sole-provider-1>
- [27] Chicopee M., (2023). Mental health shouldn't take a break. BusinessWest, 40(5), 35-36,59. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/mental-health-shouldnt-takebreak/docview/2842096379/se-2>
- [28] Childs Heyl, J. (2022, December 7). What Is Family Stress Theory? Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-family-stress-theory-6831762>
- [29] ChildHope Philippines. (2023, September 6). Filipino Children in Poverty: How to Advocate for Change. Childhope.org.ph. <https://childhope.org.ph/children-in-poverty/>
- [30] Chimeri, L. M., Tshifhumulo, R., & Musvipwa, F. M. (2019). A Reflection on the Coping Strategies of Abused Female Breadwinners in Marriage. Gender & Behaviour, Suppl.Special Edition, 17(1), 12268-12283. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarlyjournals/reflection-on-copin-g-strategies-abused-female/docview/2323350711/se-2>
- [31] Chimeziri, E. B. (2021, June 25). Fathers' Day: Dads as uncelebrated breadwinners. New Telegraph. <https://newtelegraphng.com/fathers-day-dads-as-uncelebratedbreadwinners>
- [32] Chris, E., & Cabegin. (2022). The Informally Employed in the Philippines: Issues in Job Security of Tenure, Social Security Coverage and Measurement. Philippine Journal of Labor and Industrial Relations, 39, 2022.
<https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/pjlir/article/download/9382/8296/>
- [33] Cleveland Clinic Health Essentials (2022). Are Video Games Good for You? (2024, December 2). Cleveland Clinic; Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/are-videogames-good-for-you>
- [34] Colleen, F. M., Leslie, L. M., & Dahm, P. C. (2019). Bringing home the bacon: The relationships among breadwinner role, performance, and pay. Industrial Relations, 58(1), 46-85.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/irel.12225>
- [35] Connolly, P., & Deeming, C. (2014). Becoming a Young Breadwinner? The Education, Employment and Training Trajectories of Young Fathers.

- [36] Conway, K. M., Wladis, C., & Hachey, A. C. (2021). Time Poverty and Parenthood: Who Has Time for College? *AERA Open*, 7, 233285842110116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211011608>
- [37] Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- [38] Creswell, J. W., (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches fifth edition*. SAGE publications srmo.sagepub.com.
- [39] Cruz, A. I. D. (2022, November 2). GETTING REAL: What is it like to be a firstborn in a Filipino family? Your Guide to the Big City. <https://villagepipol.com/getting-real-what-is-it-like-to-be-a-firstborn-in-a-filipino-family/?noamp=available>
- [40] Dariotis, J. K., Chen, F. R., Park, Y. R., Nowak, M. K., French, K. M., & Codamon, A. M. (2023). Parentification vulnerability, reactivity, resilience, and thriving: A mixed methods systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(13), 6197–6197. National Library of Medicine. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20136197>
- [41] Dariotis, J. K., Chen, F. R., Park, Y. R., Nowak, M. K., French, K. M., & Codamon, A. M. (2023). Parentification vulnerability, reactivity, resilience, and thriving: A mixed methods systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(13), 6197–6197. National Library of Medicine. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20136197>
- [42] Dela Peña, M. A. (2024). A Dialogue on Gratefulness: A Study on the Filipino Account of Utang na Loób in Conversation with Aquinas' notion of Gratitude. *Philippiniana Sacra*, 59(178), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.55997/1005pslix178a4>
- [43] Denden, J. (2024, June 27). How Deep-Rooted Filipino Traditions Impact Us as Individuals - Humanist Alliance Philippines International. Humanist Alliance Philippines International. <https://hapihumanist.org/2024/06/27/opinion-how-deep-rooted-filipino-traditions-impact-us-as-individuals/>
- [44] Doucet, A. (2020). Father Involvement, Care, and Breadwinning: Genealogies of Concepts and Revisioned Conceptual Narratives. *Genealogy*, 4(1), 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4010014>
- [45] Carter, C. M. (2023). Caregiving Moms Lose Nearly \$300,000 In Earnings Over A Lifetime, Report Says. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinecarter/2023/05/11/caregiving-moms-lose-nearly300000-in-earnings-over-a-lifetime-report-says/?sh=1c18c3c64f9f>
- [46] Ebasan (2025). A-Case-Study-on-the-Struggles-and-Challenges-faced-by-Filipino-Breadwinner-Beverly-Duran. *Scribd*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/851496592/A-Case-Study-on-the-Struggles-and-Challenges-faced-by-Filipino-Breadwinner-Beverly-Duran>
- [47] Elorza, M. (2019). The Influence of Religious Coping in Utilization of Mental Health Services in Filipino Americans (Order No. 13880194). Available from ProQuest Central. (2280493574). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/influence-religious-coping-utilization-mental/docview/2280493574/se-2>

- [48] Emory University (2023, November 22). In crisis, many turn to extended family for support. Futurity. <https://www.futurity.org/extended-family-support-3001802-2/1>
- [49] Enriquez, V. (1978). Kapwa: a core concept in filipino social psychology. Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review KLII, 1- 4. <https://sci-hub.se/downloads/2020-02-08/c9/enriquez1986.pdf>
- [50] Environment and Health (2024). How economic stability creates health. (2024, February 8). Environment & Health Data Portal. <https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-stories/economic-stability>
- [51] Ernstmeyer, K., & Christman, E. (2022). Nursing: Mental Health and Community Concepts. In www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. Chippewa Valley Technical College. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK590037/>
- [52] Erron L. (2023, July 18). Being the youngest in the family, no one talked much about — the untold stories. Medium. <https://itsnorre.medium.com/being-the-youngest-in-the-family-no-one-talked-much-about-d38962cd407>
- [53] Enriquez, M., (2022). Filipino women voice out stresses of being the firstborn daughter. South China Morning Post. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/people/article/3171945/filipino-women-share-stresses-being-firstborn-daughter-who-parents>
- [54] Fancourt, D., Aughterson, H., Finn, S., Walker, E., & Steptoe, A. (2021). How leisure activities affect health: A narrative review and multi-level theoretical framework of mechanisms of action. The Lancet Psychiatry, 8(4), 329–339. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366\(20\)30384-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366(20)30384-9)
- [55] Fayaz, I., & Gulzar, F. (2025). Thrive, don't survive: Building work-life balance with family support, grit and self-efficacy. IIMT Journal of Management, 2(1), 114-138. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1108/IIMTJM-05-2024-0057>
- [56] Ferreira-Valente, A., Damião, C., Pais-Ribeiro, J., & Jensen, M. P. (2020). The role of spirituality in pain, function, and coping in individuals with chronic pain. Pain Medicine, 21(3), 448-457. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/pm/pnz092>
- [57] Francisco, A. (2022). The Bunso: Being the youngest child in a typical Filipino Family. Your Guide to the Big City. <https://villagepipol.com/the-bunso-being-the-youngest-child-in-a-typical-filipino-family>
- [58] Gallardo-Vázquez, D., José Luis Miralles-Quirós, & María Mar Miralles-Quirós. (2024). Financial education and responsible consumption in undergraduate management students. The International Journal of Management Education, 22(3), 101071– 101071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101071>
- [59] Gan, Z., Liu, F., & Nang, H. (2023). The Role of Self-Efficacy, Task Value, and Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations in Students' Feedback Engagement in English Learning. Behavioral Sciences, 13(5), 428–428. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13050428>
- [60] Glowiak, M. (2024, January 23). What is self-care and why is it important for you? Southern New Hampshire University. <https://www.snhu.edu/aboutus/newsroom/health/what-is-self-care>

- [61] Gonalons-Pons, P., & Gangl, M. (2021). Marriage and masculinity: Male-breadwinner culture, unemployment, and separation risk in 29 countries. *American Sociological Review*, 86(3), 465-502. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224211012442>
- [62] Grace, Doris, Athena, Bressington, D. T., & Thanos Karatzias. (2024). How Do You Become Resilient? A Critical Realist Explanation of the Youth Resilience Process. *Adversity and Resilience Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-024-00154-z>
- [63] Grevenstein, D., Bluemke, M., Schweitzer, J., & Aguilar-Raab, C. (2019). Better Family Relationships—higher well-being: the Connection between Relationship Quality and Health Related Resources. *Mental Health & Prevention*, 14(200160), 200160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mph.2019.200160>
- [64] Grisbave M. (2024, July 14). The Burden of Being the Youngest Child - Grisbrave- Medium. Medium. <https://medium.com/@grisbrave/the-burden-of-being-the-youngest-child8692dd632fac>
- [65] Guerriero, M. A., Dipace, A., Monda, A., Maria, A. D., Polito, R., Messina, G., Monda, M., Marilena, d. P., Basta, A., Ruberto, M., Capasso, E., Moscatelli, F., & Limone, P. (2025). Relationship Between Sedentary Lifestyle, Physical Activity and Stress in University Students and Their Life Habits: A Scoping Review with PRISMA Checklist (PRISMA-ScR). *Brain Sciences*, 15(1), 78. <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci15010078>
- [66] Gundran, A. M., Manalo, J. R., Soriano, P. A., Cagsawa, R. L., & Manguiat-Borlongan, G. (2021). THE CONCEPT OF UTANG NA LOOB IN THE PHILIPPINES: UTANG NA LOOB SCALE. *Letran.edu.ph*. <https://research-manila.lettran.edu.ph/read/183>
- [67] Haley, J., Lukianoff, G., Minuchin, S., & Taffle, R. (2022, June 28). The Importance of Structure. *The Centers for Family Change*. <https://centersforfamilychange.com/2022/06/the-importance-of-structure/>
- [68] Hanafi, A. (2022). Children “Breadwinners” Forced to Abandon School, Risk Sexual Harassment to Support Families. (2022, January 21). *The Punch Newspapers*. <https://punchng.com/children-breadwinners- forced-to-abandon-schoolrisk-sexual-harassment-to-support-families/>
- [69] Harvard University. (2024, December 17). A Guide to Resilience - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resource-guides/guide-to-resilience/>
- [70] Hasselhorn, H. M., Leinonen, T., Bültmann, U., Mehlum, I. S., du Prel, J.-B., Kiran, S., Majery, N., Solovieva, S., & de Wind, A. (2022). The differentiated roles of health in the transition from work to retirement – conceptual and methodological challenges and avenues for future research. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*. <https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.4017>
- [71] Hu, A., Wu, X., Chen, T., & Li, D. (2023). Family socioeconomic status and chinese college students’ premarital sexual attitudes and behavior. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 42(3), 34. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-023-09775-1>
- [72] Huang, Y., Chen, M., Zhang, Y., Chen, X., Zhang, L., & Dong, C. (2023). Finding family resilience in adversity: A grounded theory of families with children diagnosed with leukaemia. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 32(15-16), 5160-5172. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.16615>

- [73] Huo, M., & Kim, K. (2022). Lasting impact of relationships on caregiving difficulties, burden, and rewards. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 40(1), 026540752211180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221118095>
- [74] International Labour Organization, (2019). Child Labor in Developing Countries.
- [75] Itao, K., & Kaneko, K. (2021). Evolution of family systems and resultant socio-economic structures. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00919-2>
- [76] Jackson, J., (2023). Compliance vs. Obedience: What's the difference?. <https://connectedfamilies.org/compliance-vs-obedience/>
- [77] Jeon, S. (2025). Iastate.edu. ECONOMIC PRESSURE AND POSITIVITY The Association between Economic Pressure and Positivity during Young Adulthood Shinyoung. <https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/bitstreams/93d63f24-3d54-46a1-bd73-d31c6bbb240c/download>
- [78] Jiang, S., Dong, L., & Jiang, C. (2020). Examining the link between economic strain and adolescent social behavior: Roles of social bonds and empathy. *Journal of Adolescence*, 84, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.07.015>
- [79] Johansson, K., Petersen, S., Högberg, B., Gonneke W J M Stevensrt De, Clercq, Frasilho, D., Elgar, F., & Strandh, M. (2019). The interplay between national and parental unemployment in relation to adolescent life satisfaction in 27 countries: Analyses of repeated cross-sectional school surveys. *BMC Public Health*, 19, 1-14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7721-1>
- [80] Joy, M., Gian, J., Nelmda, C., Ricafort, C., & Basmayor, N. (2024). Understanding the lived experiences of families with Extended Family Members: a phenomenological study. 2(1), 27–31. <https://doi.org/10.56183/p9s95450>
- [81] Joya, V. C. R., E. Arceo, A., E. Labial, S. L., F. Paraluman, J. J., & O. Uy, H. (2024). Exploring the Levels of Readiness in Assuming Filial Responsibility among Filipino Adults. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 7(08). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i08-19>
- [82] Kaijadoo, S. P. T., Nijhof, K. S., Klip, H., Popma, A., & Scholte, R. H. J. (2024). “Surviving against the odds. the impact of peer support workers on a chronically suicidal adolescent in secure residential youth care: A single case report from the netherlands”. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Wellbeing*, 19(1) doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2024.2409514>
- [83] Kakilla, C., (2021). Strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research: a critical essay. Preprints www.preprints.org. 10.20944.
- [84] Khajeali, N., Ahmady, S., Kalantarion, M., Sharifi, F., & Yaseri, M. (2021). Relation between stress, time management, and academic achievement in preclinical medical education: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 10(1), 32. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_600_20
- [85] Khan, Z. (2024, January 12). The Science of Spending on Vacation: Maximizing Joy Over Just Consumption. WalkWithZ. <https://www.walkwithz.com/post/the-science-ofspending-on-vacation-maximizing-joy-over-just-consumption>

- [86] Ko, K., & Hwang, W. (2021). Association between Job Demands and Fathers' Involvement between Single-Income and Dual-Income Families: The Mediating Role of Work to Family Conflict. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 47(4), 553-564.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2020.1850605>
- [87] Kowalewska, H., & Agnese, V. (2021). Breadwinning or on the breadline? Female breadwinners' economic characteristics across 20 welfare states. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 31(2), 125-142. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928720971094>
- [88] Lambert, E. (2022, September 23). Study shows children need hands-on experience to learn financial responsibility. *Phys.org*. <https://phys.org/news/2022-09- children-hands-on-financial-responsibility.html>
- [89] Lazzara, J. (2020). Chapter 8: Emerging Adulthood. Open.maricopa.edu; Maricopa Community Colleges. <https://open.maricopa.edu/devpsych/chapter/chapter-8- emerging-adulthood/>
- [90] Lee, Y. (2022). Lingering Male Breadwinner Norms as Predictors of Family Satisfaction and Marital Instability. *Social Sciences*, 11(2), 49. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020049>
- [91] Lee, T. B. (2022). I talked to 20 dads who "leaned out" so their wives could be breadwinners. *Www.fullstackeconomics.com*. Retrieved February 5, 2024, from <https://www.fullstackeconomics.com/p/i-talked-to-20-dads-who-leaned-out>
- [92] Leukhina, O. (2023). The changing role of family income in college selection and beyond. *Review - Federal Reserve Bank of St.Louis*, 105(3), 1-25. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/changing-role-family-income-college-selection/docview/2843446788/se-2>
- [93] Lim, M. J., & Rañola, S. L. B. (2022). The Concept of Utang na Loob among Select Members of Generation Z in Metro Manila. https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1073&context=conf_shsresc
- [94] Mahlangu, N. V. (2022, Mar 11). Men need help as providers and fathers. *The Star* Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/men-need-help-as-providers-fathers/docview/2637738657/se-2>
- [95] Marais, S. D. (2022, June 6). Emotion-Focused Coping: Techniques and Examples. *Psych Central*. <https://psychcentral.com/health/emotion-focused-coping-examples>
- [96] Marie, A., Delao, C. A., Vargas, M., & Shiela Loon Tirol. (2023, July 7). The Psychological Well-Being of Breadwinners in Selected Families of a Third-Class Municipality: A...ResearchGate; unknown. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373488334_The_Psychological_WellBeing_of_Breadwinners_in_Selected_Families_of_a_ThirdClass_Municipality_A_Literature_Review
- [97] Marie, A., Delao, C. A., Vargas, M., &
- [98] Shiela Loon Tirol. (2023, July 7). The Psychological Well-Being of Breadwinners in Selected Families of a Third-Class Municipality: A...ResearchGate; unknown. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373488334_The_Psychological_WellBeing_of_Breadwinners_in_Selected_Families_of_a_ThirdClass_Municipality_A_Literature_Review

- [99] Maxwell, I. (2022, September 8). Caregiving Dads, Breadwinning Mums. Shared Parenting Scotland. <https://www.sharedparenting.scot/caregiving-dads-bread-winning-mums/>
- [100] Mayo Clinic . (2023, December 23). Resilience: Build skills to endure hardship. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/resilience-training/indepth/resilience/art-20046311>
- [101] McKnight's Senior Living (2025, February 20). Among US workers that two or three jobs to cover expenses, more than half do so to cover expenses: survey. McKnight's Senior Living. <https://www.mcknightsseniorliving.com/news/more-than-half-of- us workers-work-two-or-three-jobs-to-cover-expenses-survey/>
- [102] Medina, B. (2021, August 6). A teenage breadwinner from Marinduque. PALAWAN NEWS. <https://palawan-news.com/a-teenage-breadwinner-from-marindu que/>
- [103] Milas, G., Martinović Klarić, I., Malnar, A., Saftić, V., Šupe-Domić, D., & Slavich, G. M. (2021). The impact of stress and coping strategies on life satisfaction in a national sample of adolescents: A structural equation modelling approach. *Stress and Health*, 37(5). <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3050>
- [104] Missionhurst. (n.d.). Child Breadwinners. Wwww.missionhurst.org. Retrieved February 4, 2024, from <https://www.missionhurst.org/child-breadwinners>
- [105] Mitchell, L. L., Lodi-Smith, J., Baranski, E. N., & Whitbourne, S. K. (2021). Implications of identity resolution in emerging adulthood for intimacy, generativity, and integrity across the adult lifespan. *Psychology and Aging*, 36(5), 545–556. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000537>
- [106] National Association of Secondary School Principals (2019). "Poverty and its impact on students' education." NASSP. (2019, November 14). <https://www.nassp.org/povertyand-its-impact-on-students-educ ation/>
- [107] Neneh, B. N., & Welsh, D. H. (2025). What influences family satisfaction? *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de l'Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.1780>
- [108] Nguyen, T. L., Nguyen, H. T., Nguyen, N. H., Nguyen, D. L., Nguyen, T. T. D., & Le, D. L. (2023). Factors affecting students' career choice in economics majors in the COVID19 post-pandemic period: A case study of a private university in Vietnam. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 8(2), 100338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2023.100338>
- [109] Noelle, Ma., Fajardo, T. J., Flores, J. E., Gulle, E. A., & Fuentes, J. A. (2024, November 22). Budgeting Practices and Spending Behaviors of College Students Living in Dormitories: Financial Security and Well-Being A Research Presented to the Faculty of the School of Business and Management Xavier University -Ateneo de Cagayan. ResearchGate. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.30155.40486>
- [110] Ntinda, K. (2019). Narrative Research. *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*, 411–423. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251- 4 79>
- [111] Philippine Statistics Authority | Republic of the Philippines. (2023, March 3). Psa.gov.ph.<https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/survey/labor-and-emplo yment/survey-onchildren>

- [112] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2021, December 15). Working Children and Child Labor Situation | Philippine Statistics Authority. [Psa.gov.ph. https://psa.gov.ph/content/working-children-and-child-labor-situation](https://psa.gov.ph/content/working-children-and-child-labor-situation)
- [113] Quindoza, T. L. V., Malcampo, M. C., & Rungduin, T. (2025). Ang tagapagtaguyod na anak for Filipino adults: an exploratory research. *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1108/seamj-09-2024-0063>
- [114] Raquel Tsukada (2010). The First Born Burden. https://www.econstor.eu/obitstream/10419/48330/1/77_tsukada.pdf
- [115] Reddit Dive into anything. (2023). Reddit.com. <https://www.reddit.com/r/BunsoSupportGroup/>
- [116] Ryu, S., & Fan, L. (2022). The Relationship between Financial Worries and Psychological Distress among U.S. Adults. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 44(1), 16–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-022-09820-9>
- [117] Salcedo, A. (2024, February 9). The Hidden Struggles: Downsides of Being the Breadwinner in the Philippines. Medium. <https://medium.com/@aerollsalcedo/the-hidden-struggles-downsides-of-being-the-breadwinner-in-the-philippines-e7db21ed9dd8>
- [118] Sanderson, E. (2019). Youth transitions to employment: longitudinal evidence from marginalised young people in England. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(10), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2019.1671581>
- [119] Sato, K., Kuroda, S., & Owan, H. (2020). Mental Health Effects of Long Work hours, Night and Weekend work, and Short Rest Periods. *Social Science & Medicine*, 246(112774), 112774. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112774>
- [120] Schüler, J., Haufler, A., & Ditzen, B. (2022). Social Support as a Stress Buffer or Stress Amplifier and the Moderating Role of Implicit Motives: Protocol for a Randomized Study (Preprint). *JMIR Research Protocols*. <https://doi.org/10.2196/39509>
- [121] Serido, J., Li, L., Vosylis, R., Vasquez, K., Sorgente, A., Lep, Ž., Fonseca, G., Crespo, C., Ana, P. R., Zupančič, M., & Lanz, M. (2025). Parental financial support and family emotional support to young adults during COVID-19: A help or a hindrance? *Family Process*, 64(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.13040>
- [122] Shepherd, J. (2023, June 15). The Benefits of Time Management in Reducing Stress. Medium. <https://medium.com/@effective-efficiency/the-benefits-of-time-management-in-reducing-stress-93162c386689>
- [123] Singh, A. (2023, Feb 06). Salma Hayek: Men are under too much pressure to be breadwinners. *Telegraph.Co.Uk* <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/salmahayek-men-are-under-too-much-pressure-be/docview/2773470567/se-2>
- [124] Smit, B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2018). Observations in Qualitative Inquiry: When What You See Is Not What You See. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918816766>
- [125] Suliva, M. (2020, November 16). Breadwinner in a Filipino Family. Medium. <https://sulivamaricris40.medium.com/breadwinner-in-a-filipino-family87ffbce5c0b1>

- [126] Sullivan, J. (2020). Comparing characteristics and selected expenditures of dual- and single-income households with children : Monthly Labor Review: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wwww.bls.gov. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/comparing-characteristics-and-selected-expenditures-of-dual-and-single-income-households-withchildren.htm>
- [127] Söylev, Ö. F., Kaya, Ç., & Okan, N. (2025). Spiritual orientation and mental health: An SEM analysis of meaning and death attitudes as mediators in Turkish religious officials. BMC Psychology, 13, 1-14. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02729-6>
- [128] Tablan, F. (2021, March 12). MEANINGFUL WORK FOR FILIPINOS. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359195179_MEANINGFUL_WORK_FOR_FILIPINOS
- [129] Takiguchi, Y., Matsui, M., Kikutani, M., & Ebina, K. (2022). The relationship between leisure activities and mental health: The impact of resilience and COVID-19. Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12394>
- [130] Taruc, S. A. (2019). An assessment of the sustainability and resilience of livelihoods within an Indonesian marine social-ecological system.
- [131] Taruc, R. G. D. (2019). Primary Earners: Lived Experiences of Breadwinner Moms. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 4(6), 1887–1891. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.46.41>
- [132] Tarver, E. (2019). How Social Economics Influences Your Future. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-economics>
- [133] Tee-Melegrito, R. A. (2022, December 23). What is self care? Examples and more Wwww.medicalnewstoday.com. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/self-careexamples>
- [134] Teng, J. C. C., Hilario, A. D. F., Sauler, L. M. A., Reyes, Ma. C. M. D. L., & Arcinas, M. (2021). Parentification Experiences of Filipino Young Professional Daughters During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies, 3(4), 19– 32. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jhsss.2021.3.4.3>
- [135] Terzi, E., Isik, U., Inan, B. C., Akyildiz, C., & Ustun, U. D. (2024). University students' free time management and quality of life: the mediating role of leisure satisfaction. BMC Psychology, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01745-2>
- [136] The Times of India (2023). 5 people confess what it is like to be the breadwinner in the family [Work]. <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/5-people-confess-what-is-like-bebreadwinner/docview/2828449574/se-2>
- [137] The Times of India (2022). Sole breadwinner of family, eldest of three siblings dies [Times State]. (2022, Nov 01). The Times of India (Online) <https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/sole-breadwinner-family-eldest-threesiblings/docview/2730432075/se-2>
- [138] Tsubata K. (2018, April 11). The Exponential Benefits of the Extended Family Model. Hyun Jin Preston Moon. <https://www.hyunjinmoon.com/the-exponential-benefits-of-the-extended-family-model/>

- [139] Turner, A. (2020, August 5). Social workers feel “powerless” in face of poverty afflicting families. Community Care. <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2020/08/05/socialworkers-feel-powerless-face-poverty-afflicting-families-involved-services/>
- [140] Unicef (2021). Breadwinners instead of going to school. (n.d.). [Www.unicef.org. https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/breadwinners-ins](https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/breadwinners-ins)
- [141] Turner, A. (2020, August 5). Social workers feel “powerless” in face of poverty afflicting families. Community Care. <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2020/08/05/social-workers-feel-powerless-face-poverty-afflicting-families-involved-services/>
- [142] United Nations Development Programme (2022). South Africa National Human Development Report 2022 Harnessing the Employability of South Africa’s Youth. (n.d.). https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-07/sa-nhr2022_web_0.pdf
- [143] Ullah, S., & Yusheng, K. (2020). Financial Socialization, Childhood Experiences and Financial Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Locus of Control. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02162>
- [144] Verulava, T., & Jorbenadze, R. (2022). The impact of part-time employment on students’ health. *Malta Medical Journal*, 34(1), 50–57. <https://www.mmsjournals.org/index.php/mmj/article/view/413>
- [145] Wilson, V. (2021, October 14). Cultural Expectations: How Social Norms Influence Our Choices. *Exceptional Futures*. <https://www.exceptionalfutures.com/culturalexpectations/>
- [146] Vosylis, R., & Klimstra, T. (2020). How Does Financial Life Shape Emerging Adulthood? Short-Term Longitudinal Associations Between Perceived Features of Emerging Adulthood, Financial Behaviors, and Financial Well-Being. *Emerging Adulthood*, 10(1), 216769682090897. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696820908970>
- [147] Who they are, and what they do: Perspectives on work–life balance among entrepreneurs and wage earners. (2024). *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1749. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04338-x>
- [148] Yellen, J. L. (2020, May). The history of women’s work and wages and how it has created success for us all. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-history-of-womens-work-and-wages-and-how-it-has-created-success-for-us-all/>
- [149] Yim, E. P.-Y. (2022). Effects of Asian cultural values on parenting style and young children’s perceived competence: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(905093). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.905093>
- [150] Yeung, J. W. K. (2021). Family Processes, Parenting Practices, and Psychosocial Maturity of Chinese Youths: A Latent Variable Interaction and Mediation Analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(8), 4357. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18084357>



Sarah B. Cariño is a graduate of the Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Mindanao – Tagum College. She has recently completed her Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) - Graduate School. Sarah worked as a faculty member of the Department of Arts and Sciences Education at UM Tagum College for three (3) years, where she teaches various psychology subjects and guides students in their academic and research development. And now, she is currently working as the Head of the Office of Student Services and Affairs at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., Tagum Campus. She has published two research studies on human development and presented one of them at an international conference. Beyond her academic duties, she has also served as a resource speaker in various mental health and psychology related seminars and workshops across Davao City, Davao del Norte and Davao Oriental. Her work focuses on raising mental health awareness, fostering resilience among youth, and promoting ethical and culturally grounded psychological practices. Sarah’s dedication to the field continues to grow through her ongoing studies, professional engagements, and commitment to the well-being of individuals and communities she serves.