

Normative solidarity: narratives of solo parent multigenerational caregivers in selected resettlement areas in Cavite

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Abstract: This study explored the experiences of solo parents who provide simultaneous support to their minor children and senior parents in selected resettlement areas in Cavite, Philippines. Specifically, it sought to determine the reasons for their role pursuance, unravel the adversities they encountered and the coping strategies they employed, and identify their motivations for continuously juggling their multigenerational responsibilities. The stories of eight participants selected through non-proportional quota sampling were uncovered and interpreted using narrative analysis. Findings revealed that their high regard for cultural family values and traditions drove them to become caregivers for two generations. The demands of having young and old dependents led them to face financial constraints, unfulfilled aspirations, work interference, and health-compromising behaviours associated with their role as family mediators. Social support systems and multiple sources of livelihood played a significant part in easing these burdens. Despite the hardships in their household responsibilities, they managed to carry on due to the long-term care needs of family members and the positive feelings they acquired from caregiving. This may further support the need to implement or amend policy programs intended to provide recognition and workplace consideration for individuals in this unique familial position.

Keywords: multigenerational caregiving; family values; solidarity



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Introduction

Strong commitment to family obligations has been a part of the core values that set Filipinos apart from the rest of developing nations. Applause is granted to those who did not abandon their home, while the others who take a different path towards independence receive a handful of disappointments. Filipinos carry this mentality like an unspoken oath to their family; hence, even at rock bottom, they devote large

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sums of resources to support their kin. Despite being a binding tie that connects and strengthens the parental bond, instilling this sense of familism can also lead to the strangulation of the beholden children.

In typical Filipino households, some children are raised to repay the debt of gratitude towards their ageing parents (Laguna et al., 2019). Elders expect the younger generation to find a decent job and shoulder the needs of their immediate family. Since Filipino families have long embraced this culture of reciprocity and solidarity, whether a child owes their parents is now replaced with a question about the length of obligation: If giving back is a must, when should a child bask in unpaid caregiving tasks?

Multigenerational caregiving is an existing phenomenon that compels working adults in extended households to simultaneously balance the competing demands of unpaid childcare responsibilities and eldercare duties. Of 69.40 million people in the working population, there are 48 young dependents and eight old dependents per 100 workers (Authority, 2022). Four of every 100 heads of household support family members who belong to two or more distinct generations (Tongson, 2020). They work twice as hard to provide for the necessities of a child who is not yet capable of supporting their own and an elder who no longer has the strength to earn for themselves. This living arrangement has forced them to work multiple jobs, sacrifice physical and mental health, endure extreme stress, delay career development, and neglect their own needs just to make both ends meet (Ke & Fu, 2022) (Sudarji et al., 2022) (S. E. Patterson & Margolis, 2019). Since multigenerational caregivers are not yet widely acknowledged in the Philippines, Filipinos in this unique family position receive less attention.

Despite the predicaments mentioned, shouldering the needs of multiple dependents can still bring fulfillment to those who value family solidarity. Normative solidarity underlines the desire of Filipinos to continue taking care of their elderly parents even after building a family of their own (Miguel et al., 2022). Extending a helping hand boosts their sense of pride and satisfaction since they grow to consider informal caregiving as a way to reciprocate affection and gratitude rather than a mere compliance to the cultural tradition. Due to this strong interconnectedness, the number of adults with two- to three-generation dependents is expected to rise in the succeeding years as the old age population continues to increase (Tongson, 2020) (Laguna et al., 2019). While those who have extra money to pull out of their pockets may commit to these obligations with ease, the ones who have less than enough might need to endure the struggles and eventually bleed in the process.

The province of Cavite caters to 58 percent of 26,609 solo parents in Region IV-A CALABARZON (Child & Services, 2006). Specifically, the cities of Dasmariñas and Trece Martires hold the highest number of solo parent residents, accounting to 3,446 and 1,118 individuals, respectively (Profile, 2020). The absence of their significant others has compelled them to raise their children and shoulder the family expenses alone. Fulfilling these obligations became even more challenging for solo parents who are residing in resettlement areas with smaller space and inadequate job opportunities within close proximity (Collado & Arpon, 2021) (Ferrer, 2019). Since the occupancy to such a relocation site is not free, some relocates are sharing one small housing unit with extended family members to save money for necessities like food and electricity (Samonte & Djalante, 2024).

Most existing studies on multigenerational caregiving focus mainly on the experiences of middle-aged workers who have a well-paying job, an owned house, and/or support systems who can help them fulfill their household duties. It has not yet been established how Filipinos in this unique familial position perceive their imposed family obligations in the face of poverty and other life adversities. To address the gaps, this study aims to uncover the reasons for role acquisition, adversities encountered, coping strategies, and motivations for continuously fulfilling the responsibilities of multigenerational caregivers in selected resettlement areas in Cavite.

Method

This study utilized narrative analysis, a qualitative approach which seeks to gather data or information by having one or more individuals recount a particular event or significant occurrence in their lives (Creswell, 2014).

Non-proportional quota sampling technique was employed in selecting the participants of this study. Specific criteria are set, subgroups are formed, and a minimum sample size is required for each category to guarantee an equal representation of target population despite non-random selection (Etikan, 2017). Specifically, the participants are eight females aged 43 to 58 years old, the main family providers, solo parents to at least one child (aged 17 or younger), supporting an aging parent with no retirement pension (aged 65 or older), and renting in one of the resettlement housing units located in the cities of Dasmariñas or Trece Martires, Cavite.

A permission letter to conduct an interview was obtained from the City Social Welfare and Development officer and barangay chairperson of the said locale. After securing permission and receiving assistance from government workers, the target participants were contacted via phone call, text, or chat to introduce the study and set an appointment for a research-related home visit or meetup. The objectives, perceived risks and benefits, assurance of confidentiality, and the participant's right to decline or withdraw were disclosed in the provided informed consent. The consent form was translated into Filipino to ensure a complete understanding of what the agreement encompasses. All of them were free to ask questions or seek clarification.

The first meetup was utilized to obtain informed consent, establish rapport, and once the participant expressed their intent to take part in the study, the interview proceeded. The data collection for four of eight participants took place inside their resettlement housing unit, while the remaining half were interviewed at the barangay hall. All participants were given the liberty to decide on this matter.

The instrument used was the semi-structured interview questions reviewed and validated by three registered psychometricians. It comprised of 28 open-ended questions that may be answered in the form of enumeration, detailed explanation, or narration. As permitted, the entire interview process was audio recorded for transcription purposes. Pseudonyms were utilized in transcript and research manuscript to maintain anonymity.

A debriefing from a registered guidance counselor was offered to the participants should there be the need to alleviate any feelings of distress or discomfort that arose during the interview. A grocery package was also given as a token of appreciation for their time and cooperation.

The extracted themes were checked and validated by three field experts. Contextual reflexivity was employed in the interpretation of obtained results to reduce the personal biases and to anchor the participant narratives in culturally embedded circumstances (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Since the study highlights the nature of Filipino kinship, the family values and household dynamics of the participants were taken into consideration in order to understand how they uniquely shaped their experiences as caregivers for two generations.

Result

Table 1

Data Demography Participants

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| Participant | Age | Occupation | Young Dependent/s | Old Dependent |
|-------------|-----|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| Karla | 43 | Barangay worker | 13- and 14-year-old sons, 15-year-old daughter | 68-year-old mother |
| Vanessa | 44 | Barangay worker | 15-year-old son | 67-year-old mother |
| Rose | 47 | Government employee | 16-year-old son | 68-year-old mother |
| Wena | 55 | Street food vendor | 15- and 12-year-old daughters, 11-year-old son | 77-year-old mother |
| Cris | 48 | Production operator | 7-year-old son | 76-year-old mother |
| Mai | 50 | Office clerk | 12-year-old son | 85-year-old mother |
| Cheche | 52 | Rag weaver | 16- and 17-year-old daughters | 77-year-old mother |
| Luz | 53 | Sewer/tailor | 17-year-old son | 75-year-old mother |

Reasons for Being Multigenerational Caregivers

Marital separation

Following a separation due to verbal and physical abuse, infidelity, unbridled vices, and even extreme circumstances, Karla, Vanessa, and Wena sever ties with their partners and return to their maternal home, becoming catalysts for their multigenerational responsibilities. Karla tried to endure and fix her relationship with her partner for the sake of having a complete family; but in the end, she realized that staying together could only lead to more hurtful encounters:

My partner and I used to fight a lot due to his alcohol addiction. Before we ended up hurting each other more, I decided to leave and avoid him for good. I brought my children with me, and we stayed at the house of my mother.

Similarly, after a series of unfavorable past experiences from her previous partners, Vanessa opted to become a solo parent and a primary provider to her child and mother, respectively. She recognized that her decision to separate from her partner was better than letting herself be in pain physically, emotionally, and mentally. She stated:

I lived with my partner for quite a long time; but due to his illegal vices, our relationship did not last. He used to hurt me every time he was under the influence of drugs. When I reached my limit and could not take it anymore, I mustered the courage to part ways with him even though I knew that handling the responsibilities alone would take a toll on me.

Due to infidelity and violent tendencies where her life was endangered by her live-in partner, Wena chose to end her 5-year dysfunctional relationship with him:

He is not contented with me; he has many other women. There were times when he almost killed me. He is really cruel. When I thought of my children, I opted to split up with him. I don't want to die yet. I still want to live for my children. So, from then on, we lived at my parent's house.

Reciprocating care and kindness

Some participants shared that one of their primary reasons for fulfilling their role as a multigenerational caregiver was their strong sense of reciprocity and their desire to return the favor to their parent. In particular, Rose mentioned that she found it easy to embrace her family responsibilities since she

used to rely on her mother for child-rearing assistance when her son was still young. Now that her mother is older and weaker, she felt like it was only natural to return the favor and extend the same courtesy towards her. She affirmed:

I obliged myself (to take up the role), since as a solo parent, my mother used to look after my son whenever I was out to work. It felt like it was my responsibility to take care of them all.

Sharing the same sentiments, Cris expressed that while she valued her position as breadwinner to both of her dependents, her deep appreciation and dependence on her mother sparked her sense of obligation to match her mother's hard work in helping her to take care of her only son. Furthermore, she noted that her mother's involvement in childcare alleviated some of the strain associated with her unique position. She said:

My mother is taking care of my child because I have a job. I have no husband, and my son was born in wedlock. It was really difficult to support him by myself. Thankfully, my mom is there to support me by helping me with childcare sometimes. My mother is very supportive of me. I'm grateful that she is there.

Repaying parents for their act of kindness is not unusual for a child within the Filipino context. With morally upright parents present in her upbringing, Cheche aspired to emulate and repay them for looking after her and her children during dire moments by helping her bedridden mother in her later years, saying:

My mother did not oblige me to take care of her, but since she was not a bad parent to me and my siblings, I feel the need to look after her... When I got pregnant and had children, no one was there to assist me but my parents. They helped me buy medicines and diaper.

Filial piety

Luz's visually-impaired mother left their family and resided with her other partner. As the second oldest child, Luz became the acting mother to her siblings for a long time. Despite being gone for the majority of her life, she still wanted to give her mother the help she needed in order to make up for the time she had missed and the moments she had not spent with her. For Luz, it is far more important to forgive her mother than to harbor personal grievances. She narrated:

My mother was gone for a long time. When she came back, she wanted me to take care of her. Even after being asked to stay with my siblings, she insisted to live with me. My mother is ashamed to reside with them because of what happened. Since we are broken family, she became my responsibility.

Accepting gender roles

Being the only daughter in a male-dominated household, Rose developed an innate sense of maternal responsibilities when her brothers built their own families and focused on their paternal duties:

My mother has no one to rely on since my siblings are all boys. As a woman, I am the only one among us who can understand her situation better.

Another participant, Mai, expressed the same sentiments. She recognized that her other siblings might be having a hard time in sustaining their own individual families, hence accepting the multigenerational caregiving responsibility:

I have six siblings, I'm the only girl, and my father already passed away. When my brothers established their own families, no one could take care of my mother but me.

Encountered Adversities

Financial constraint

Despite the attempts to manage their competing roles, it was inevitable that the participants would run into difficulties. One of the most prevalent themes amongst the eight participants was financial constraints. Without anybody to split the family's monetary burden, the participants struggled to balance and meet the multitude of demands of their young and elderly dependents.

Karla mentioned that she struggled in allocating their insufficient finances as she occasionally ran out of money before the following paycheck. She experienced having no adequate money to sustain the education of her three children in secondary level, the medication of her mother with chronic illness, and the daily costs of living, simultaneously. It frustrates her to have nothing to give when all she ever wanted is to provide for what her family needs:

The most difficult challenge is when you are lacking financially. It is frustrating to hear my children say, "Ma, I need to buy something" or "Ma, I need this." I often ask myself where would I get the money from? I only earn my salary as a barangay worker monthly...

Vanessa, who has osteoarthritis, shared the same sentiments:

I only earn small allowance and it is not sufficient for all of us. Sometimes, I have no money to buy the things my son needs for school. That's the reality. Not being able to give him what he needs is painful for me because I feel useless. When my joint hurts, I cannot move, I cannot find a way to work for them.

Cris also acknowledged that since her dependents' basic needs accounted for the majority of her income, she often found herself in financial difficulty during situations of emergency. However, albeit falling short and having inadequate financial resources, she attempted to celebrate special occasions as she wanted to be able to carry out her role as a parent to her child. She recalled an anecdote:

During my son's seventh birthday, my pocket is empty. My mother just gave him one hundred pesos as a gift, so I used it to buy him french fries and hamburger at Jollibee. While watching him eat his food, my son told me, "Mommy, let's split my hamburger in half since you are not eating anything." It made me cry. He is only seven years old and I have no money to buy him a decent meal.

As a solo parent, they have the right to apply to respective government programs that offer help and tend to their privileges. Unfortunately, Cheche shared that her experienced financial constraints intensified after they were removed from a government subsidy list. She narrated with tears in her eyes:

My heart breaks every time my children ask for money. All I could do is cry and cry. I cannot do anything but to endure the pain of not being able to give them what they want. I cannot even support my mother financially since I do not have any money.

Family-to-work interference

Due to the taxing nature of the role of multigenerational caregiving, negative emotions and unfavorable occurrences at home can spillover into the workplace of some of the participants. Rose detailed that when she was still working farther away from their house, she sometimes found it difficult to concentrate on her job due to constant worry about their domestic situation. She reminisced:

When my son was still young, working away from him was really hard. It was uncomfortable to leave him under the supervision of my aging mother, knowing that she has limited physical capacity to care for a toddler. The constant worry about the situation of my parent and my child somewhat affected my performance at work. Besides that, when any of them gets sick, I have to file an immediate leave.

Karla mainly spends her 24/7 for familial and occupational obligations, following the same routine of fulfilling household chores and side hustling every day. Due to the need for constant care provisions of her dependents, most particularly her sickly mother, she missed several opportunities to earn extra money, saying:

At times, I had to turn down some clients who wanted to avail my manicure services to look after my mother. I cannot leave the house because my children cannot handle their grandmother on their own.

Compromising health

On the other hand, the capability of Mai to fulfill their roles were hampered by her medical concerns. She had to sacrifice her own medications in multiple instances to attend to her dependents' needs first:

My mother has maintenance for hypertension, and recently, we found out that her cholesterol and sugar levels are high. I also have psoriasis which requires lifetime treatment. Sometimes, I cannot sleep due to stress. If I do not get any sleep, my skin gets itchy and my head aches thinking about what to do. There were times when I skipped buying my own medication to meet the needs of my mother and my child.

Wena shared that she often found herself in tears during the quiet moments of the night in light of the hardships she had to endure to diligently fulfill her role as a mother to her child and a daughter to her mother. Additionally, she becomes emotionally fatigued from the strain of her physically demanding obligations. She said:

My household responsibilities and sidelines made me really, really tired. Sometimes, all I could do is cry silently at night while enduring the hardship and physical exhaustion I feel inside.

Mediating generational gap

Being sandwiched in the middle of two distinct generations has compelled Rose to act as the mediator. Whenever there is a conflicting interest or misunderstanding between her son and mother, she has to make necessary adjustments and set aside her own personal sentiments and emotions in order to concentrate on the pressing concern at hand to prevent further conflicts within the household.

If there is a misunderstanding, you have to stand in the middle. You have to adjust for them. You are living with different... different generations, right? You know, seniors tend to be stubborn so you have to always do as they say. Then, you also have a minor to look out for.

Unfulfilled dreams

Cheche mentioned her desire to pursue her studies. She was more than willing to try again but mere desire is not enough for her as time, effort, and resources are equally needed in order to make her dream work. Aside from the need to be a practical mother of a big household, she also took great consideration of her age. She softly stated:

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I should have studied, but it felt like a shame. I want to study. I want to graduate from high school but I cannot do it because I have to put my family first.

To dedicate all her efforts and attention in fulfilling their role as a multigenerational caregiver, Rose had to sacrifice her personal needs, goals and desires. She had no choice but to devote more time and allocate more resources for family needs, saying:

Sometimes you want to go on a vacation or visit different places to relax, but you will go against it to take care of your family. You can only catch up with your friends for a limited period of time. I do not also buy stuff for myself; I choose to prioritize what they need.

Similarly, Luz had to refuse the offer to work a well-paying job abroad just to fulfill her numerous obligations in the household, including assisting her visually-impaired mother:

I was not able to work abroad because I have to take care of my mother. There were many offers from my previous foreign employers, but I could not accept any of them.

Coping Strategies

Side hustle

With the aim to stabilize their financial situation and repay their acquired debt, some participants perform multiple side jobs to fulfill their role. They utilized their time off work and endured exhaustion just to find another way to meet the demands of their two-generation dependents. Karla, Vanessa, Cris, Mai, and Cheche, respectively stated:

I need to find other means to earn extra income, so I offer manicure services to my neighborhood when I'm free. I use the earnings to pay for our daily expenses. (Karla)

Sometimes, I do buy and sell. I will get stuff to sell, then pay once the item is sold. Consignment, consignment only since I have no extra money to spend for capital. (Vanessa)

I found other means to earn. I wash dirty laundry, and I also accept housekeeping. (Cris)

When my child has no classes, I ask him to look after his grandmother while I do my side hustle as a tricycle driver. I will do everything to get through a day or two. (Mai)

I do sideline since no one else will provide for my family's needs. Sometimes, I sew rag, offer massage services... anything to earn money. (Cheche)

Solo parent benefit

In order to alleviate their experienced hardships, the participants found multiple ways and means to address their difficulties. Being a member of Solo Parent Association has some privileges that the participants used to handle the adversities they had encountered. Particularly, Rose took days off to perform her household responsibilities using the 'seven days leave with pay' grant of the association based on the legislation, saying:

Since I am also a solo parent, we have a leave benefit, seven days leave with pay. I found comfort in knowing that I can attend to the needs of my mother and my child without losing a few days-worth of compensation. I can use the solo parent benefits for such matter.

Reliance on social support

When things get out of control, most of the participants rely on their family members, friends, and other social networks for help and encouragement. Mai often depends on her son and some relatives to help care for her mother:

I ask my 12-year-old son to look after my mother when he has no classes. I can already trust him to do basic tasks for his grandmother like assisting, following orders, and reaching for the things she needs ... My cousin and sister are also willing to provide assistance when my psoriasis gets triggered.

Wena indicated her reluctance to depend on her siblings for financial support given that the majority of her siblings share a comparable socioeconomic situation. But similar to Mai, she also turned to her siblings for emotional support and guidance:

I often ask my sibling for advice; she really helps me solve and handle the problems I encountered.

On the other hand, Rose relied on her peers emotionally and sought for advice when her household situation became burdensome. They give the participant an outlet to express what she feels about her living condition and family situation. In turn, she gets to know whether her way of handling the domestic dispute is appropriate or not:

You also need a circle of friends to talk about your problems with. If the home situation gets heavy and you no longer know how to handle it, you can ask other people for advice. They may help you figure out what to do to make things right.

Faith in God

In times of uncertainties and cycles of struggles, believing and trusting a supreme being became an avenue for some participants to cope with their struggles. For Cheche, her profound faith in God served as a beacon of hope, motivating her to keep pursuing her goals and an assurance of a better life in the future; that despite all her struggles, she can rest and surrender her heavy heart to a divine being that will guide and strengthen her.

I keep on praying and telling Him, "Lord, show me and give me the wisdom to know what I should do." I entrust and leave everything in His hands because I have no one to talk about my problems with. I don't have a husband... I just cry out to the Lord.

Motivations for Role Continuance

Rewarding feeling

Notwithstanding their adversities encountered, participants indicated that they are willing to persist in fulfilling their role as a breadwinner solo parent multigenerational caregiver to their young and senior dependents. Karla felt priceless happiness and satisfaction whenever she accomplished some things for her mother and children. It is rewarding for her to see her mother slowly recover, and she feels utterly proud to witness her teenage children achieve any personal or academic milestone:

I'm happy. I'm happy with my current situation because my children grew up so well. From being a child, they are gradually maturing, right? I could not imagine how I did it. My god, I made it. I'm happy to see my children and my mom like that. It does not feel like I struggle at all.

Some of the participants also indicated that their role as multigenerational caregiver became their main source of change, joy, and strength prompting their desire to continue performing it. For Cris, the arrival of her son and motherhood served as the trigger for transformation. She highlighted how her priorities and perspective moved towards her son's well-being, and how her son's arrival became her primary source of joy and fulfillment:

Ever since my child came into my life, I saw myself changing for the better. He became my priority. He is the reason why I am happy. I really, really love him. I will spend the rest of my life with him.

Likewise, Mai felt more fulfilled while performing her role and she indicated that even their presence became her comfort when she was tired. The support from her dependents served as the driving force to continue with her role despite hardships:

Before having a child, I get easily stressed out over minor inconvenience. But now that I have him and my mother to support and cheer me on, the exhaustion I feel becomes more manageable. The two of them are really supportive of me. Seeing them happy makes me happy. I cannot give up on them.

To bridge the gap between hers and her mother, Luz continued performing her role as a multigenerational caregiver to her young and senior dependents. She sees her role as a source of happiness and satisfaction rather than an obligated act; enough to make personal sacrifices in the name of performing her responsibilities towards her mother and children.

I'm happy to support my family even though sometimes, I struggle to assist my mother when going to the comfort room or riding in public transportation. It was still fulfilling. Besides, if I want to live a lavish life, I could have accepted the offer to work abroad, but I could not do that to them.

For Vanessa, her role became her driving force for her improvement. She acknowledged the significance of her dependence by saying:

They motivated me to stay strong and improve my health to continuously look after them. I always pray for healing so I can do a lot of things and fulfill my responsibilities to my child and my mother.

Love and compassion

As Rose witnessed her father's abandonment and infidelity and going through the same situation herself, she developed a strong sense of unconditional love and great compassion directed towards her mother and son. When asked what drove her to continue fulfilling her responsibilities to them, she answered:

My love for them, most particularly for my son, right? Compassion and love...

Long-term care needs of parents

Considering that her mother listens to no one but her, Karla finds it difficult to leave her side. She opted not to move to the house she acquired to personally nurse her sickly mother. With the desire to be part of her mother's journey to recovery, she continues to juggle childcare and eldercare responsibilities:

Now that my mother is chronically sick, she cannot go through life without me. I really need to be there for them, for her, because she needs to be constantly reminded about the food and medicine she needs to intake.

Provide a better quality of life

Growing up in a difficult environment gave Wena the drive to overcome obstacles and the determination to make sacrifices in order to provide her children with a better quality of life. She added that she was prepared to go above and beyond and do all in her ability to make sure her children would not go through the same struggles or sufferings she went through:

Having experienced hardships in life motivated me to do everything I could to not let my child go through the same thing.

Discussion

Predominantly, all eight participants are extrinsically motivated to take on their role as multigenerational caregivers. To break free from an abusive and unsafe home environment, some participants opted to sever ties with their spouses, leading to the eventual solo parenting and acquisition of their unique role. Due to the additional responsibilities bestowed upon the solo mothers, limitation in resources compelled them to create extended family households to gain benefits from resource pooling (Cross, 2018). In addition, most of them often relied on the help of their elderly parents in child-rearing responsibilities, leading to the multigenerational living arrangements (Herbst-Debby, 2018). While some were bound by marital separation and unfavorable life course, others embraced the steep demands attached to this unique familial position due to the high regard they placed on Filipino family values such as reciprocity, filial piety, and debt of gratitude towards their elderly parents. With these values, Filipinos hold great importance to the concept of mutual concession and give-and-take tradition, most particularly when they are the recipients of kindness and generosity (Miguel et al., 2022). When parents put forth a lot of effort to meet their children's holistic necessities and guarantee their welfare, the cultural expectation is that their offspring would repay the favors by providing care for their parents in their later years. In line with this, the unpaid and self-initiated family caregivers view their role as a means of showing gratitude and returning love, rather than as a burdensome obligation with little return (Laguna et al., 2019). Socially constructed beliefs about women also play a huge part in the acquisition of their position. Traditional gender roles often assign women as the primary responsible for the maintenance and fulfillment of family care and child-rearing obligations (Morales, 2019). This perception is reinforced by the expectation that once they enter parenthood, women should uphold their normative obligations to elderly parents alongside their maternal responsibilities to younger dependents.

Owing to the pressures of having two-generation dependents, financial constraints and economic limitations appeared as the most apparent adversities in the narrated accounts of all participants. Middle-generation breadwinners often find themselves in a financially precarious situation as a result of their socioeconomic level, which heightens the pressure on them to try and provide enough money for both their own family and their elderly parents (Sneed et al., 2022). Consequently, the burden to sustain economic needs is heightened when a family has only one female breadwinner instead of dual earner since there is a greater chance of experiencing income/expenses disparities (Kowalewska & Vitali, 2021). Their limitations to ensure financial stability may result in inability to provide their dependent's basic needs (e.g., decent education or access to healthcare) and other demands, compromising some necessities and difficulty in

ensuring a quality of life. Additionally, the psychological and physical health concerns experienced by solo mothers were also attributable to their economic concerns (Mundo et al., 2019). The concurrent demands of multigenerational caregiving warranted the ramification of the psychological strain and unfavorable domestic circumstances to the work environment. Their constant concern on their dependents' well-being within their work hours impeded their performance and productivity. As a response to household emergencies, some of them resort to taking leave of absences and reducing work hours in order to look after their dependents (C. L. Patterson, 2021). Due to constant psychological strain and demanding responsibilities, some participants were forced to compromise their own health in order to fulfill their roles. Participants regularly felt overburdened and under immense pressure, which could lead to physical and emotional fatigue, and deterioration of health caused by the difficulties of juggling their parental and financial responsibilities.

Apart from that, one participant faced difficulties in mediating the generational gap. It stemmed from having a grown-up child who is reluctant to compromise for the desire of their grandparents, and vice versa (Sudarji et al., 2022). Therefore, multigenerational caregivers are extremely baffled and more restrained by the conflicting situation at home. Other than the abovementioned adversities, time also became a luxury. Their multigenerational caregiving role compelled them to set aside personal needs. In light of the culturally normative value placed upon the family, Filipinos hold a higher regard to the well-being of their kin over their personal welfare (Solitario, 2022). Even with the desire and choice to do what they want, their filial responsibility binds them to prioritize the provision of care for family members, sacrificing their personal dreams and aspirations in life.

As a way to handle the predicaments they encountered, the participants engage in numerous livelihoods, including manicure services, housekeeping, and online selling, among others. Searching for another means to increase income is typically observed among solo parent providers (Ramos & Tus, 2020). This effort reflects their commitment to improving their family's economic situation, maximizing their available time, and using their talent to engage in paid tasks. Subsidized by the government, solo parents were granted privileges to alleviate their burden to provide for their families. Specifically, under the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, the Filipino lone parents can take paid leave for seven consecutive days should they need to be present in important milestones or events of their children (Tongson, 2018). It allows them to cater the needs of her children while also assisting her ailing parents. They also made use of their support systems for additional strength and encouragement. Due to the close-knit nature of Filipino families, capable members typically offer financial or even physical support to protect financially vulnerable family members (Mundo et al., 2019). The help offered by the extended family members solidifies the household led by the solo parent (Ramos & Tus, 2020). This highlights the Filipino values of depending on family members during the times of needs which further strengthen the familial connection; hence promoting solidarity among family members. Besides that, solo parents frequently turned to their peers for help with non-financial difficulties in an effort to shield their families from distress (Mundo et al., 2019). When all else failed and the problem had gone beyond their control, some of them opted to just detach and leave everything in God's hands. As a solo parent who is constantly bombarded with multiple and conflicting demands, their faith served as a beacon of hope.

While external forces prompted the participants to become multigenerational caregivers, intrinsic motivations drove them to continuously fulfill the responsibilities attached to their role. Some participants stated that the positive emotions they feel towards their dependents made them decide to carry on amidst the hardships they have to endure in the process. The rewarding feelings they received from caregiving fueled their urge to juggle childcare responsibilities alongside eldercare duties. Finding joy in serving their dependents, informal family caregivers view their role as a means of showing gratitude and returning love,

rather than as a burdensome obligation with little chance of success (Laguna et al., 2019). They acquire a sense of shared success just by looking at how their efforts gradually pay off. Additionally, regardless of the struggles that come along their way, the love they have for their family outweighs the desire to leave and have a comfortable life. Despite receiving no formal recognition to acknowledge their sacrifices, the thought of being a good parent to their children and a good child to their mother is enough to reinforce the participants' desire to continue portraying their valuable role in their lives. Apart from the personal gains, participants expressed their selfless desire to prioritize family necessities over their own autonomy. Their commitment to break the cycle of hardship and the willingness to make necessary sacrifices on their own expense were evident.

Conclusions

Normative solidarity underlines the formation of the sandwich generation. It implies that the heightened expectations and pressure to conform with cultural values and traditions have greatly influenced the existence of multigenerational caregivers. They grew up believing that any favorable treatment they received from their parents should be reciprocated; hence, they feel indebted to support them once the latter reached the period of late adulthood. Stereotypical beliefs about gender roles in the household also remain apparent. It is highly normalized to see women being assigned to care for vulnerable family members, while men are given the autonomy to live independently. However, the reason for multigenerational caregiving does not always stem from the dependency of old dependents. In certain instances, the caregivers themselves are the ones who need the practical support of their parents.

Providing for the varying needs of two generations requires holistic preparation since it demands not just ample time and finances but also patience and endurance to withstand multiple adversities at once. Owing to the fact that multigenerational caregivers have limited time to cater their personal needs, it can also be inferred that they are more susceptible to experience burnout and to acquire certain diseases as compared to those who only have one generation to take care of. They find it difficult to exhibit any hint of weakness or vulnerability, most particularly in front of their parents and children. They often resort to hiding behind their strong facade to let their dependents feel less shaken by the challenges they encounter in life.

Multigenerational caregivers may be bound by cultural expectations and blood relation, but it is truly their love and commitment that push them to continue surpassing the waves of multigenerational caregiving. They feel rewarded just by seeing how their efforts and sacrifices result in the betterment of their young and old dependents. In a general sense, it can be concluded that caregiving is not a one-way process that only benefits the care recipients. It is a give-and-take cycle that often transcends beyond what is necessitated.

Future researchers may consider exploring the same phenomenon with male or older participants. Particularly, multigenerational caregivers aged 60 or older would be ideal prospects to identify whether family caregiving leads to life satisfaction and fulfillment (integrity) or regret and disappointment (despair) for the neglected aspirations resulting from their multiple household obligations. They may also consider exploring rural areas where access to resources is limited in order to identify potential differences in terms of struggles and experiences. They are encouraged to identify the prevalence and demography of multigenerational caregivers in the country; and determine the psychological strain, burnout, and depressive tendencies they may experience. This may provide adequate support for the implementation of community support programs and amendments to existing labor policies in the country.

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