



FORCED INTO LARGER SHOES: SIBLING PERCEPTIONS OF STRESS ACCUMULATION, COPING RESOURCES, AND ADAPTATION IN OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS' FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Parentification is problematic. Siblings' perceptions regarding the assumption of parental responsibilities by Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) were explored. Using a qualitative descriptive design, ten purposively selected participants were thematized. As a result, siblings encounter stress arising from the absence of parental support, caregiving overload, and time constraints. Resource strains are perceived as financial hardship, uncooperative siblings, exploitative relatives, and communication gaps. Siblings develop perceptions of accelerated adulthood and parental inadequacy, yet demonstrate resilience and positive self-transformation. Themes of divergence from the Double ABC-X Model emerged through defiance of lateral authority, informal economic hustling, and physiological somatization of stress. School heads may provide flexible academic arrangements and implement student caregiver-sensitive policies. Multiple linear regression, mediation, and moderation analyses, qualitative inquiry, and Exploratory Factor Analysis concerning parentification may be pursued.

KEYWORDS: Forced into larger shoes, sibling perceptions of stress accumulation, coping resources, adaptation in Overseas Filipino Workers' families, Panabo City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Parentification is a major issue in today's world, as children are forced to take on duties that parents would normally handle when parents travel overseas for work. Parentification is the inversion of normal parent-child roles that occurs when youngsters are forced to assume adult responsibilities and care for the family. It involves more than just housework; it entails assuming adult responsibilities, such as caring for siblings and running the household, for which many children are not emotionally or mentally prepared (Dariotis et al., 2023).

In many parts of the world, parentification takes different forms, but it can be especially difficult when parents are away due to migration. According to studies, children in families where parents travel abroad frequently take on adult responsibilities, which affects their development and family caregiving duties (Alfiasari et al., 2025). Research from Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia indicates that children of migrant parents frequently suffer with their mental, social, and emotional well-being. However, providing quality treatment and maintaining contact can be beneficial (Alfiasari et al., 2025).

In the Philippines, parentification brought on by parental migration is a serious issue. Being one of the top nations to send workers overseas, many Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) leave their children behind to support themselves financially, forcing older children and others to take on the role of caregiver. Research conducted in Southeast Asia reveals the difficulties faced by Filipino children left by migrating parents when caregiver support is of poor quality (Dreby & Stutz, 2023). Older children who are abandoned experience a profound impact on their emotions, social lives, and development. Research frequently shows that these kids face stress, additional domestic

duties, and disrupted family relations, which can lead to feelings of loneliness, internal conflict, and pressure to become more self-sufficient (Banaybanay et al., 2025). These negative effects necessitated the study of this issue.

This study is significant because it sheds light on what older siblings experience when they assume adult roles because of their parents' migration. Understanding the experiences of these siblings can help find ways to tackle social and economic imbalances, aligning with SDG 10. Getting to know these siblings' struggles aligns with Holy Cross of Davao College's goal of shaping caring, socially aware individuals. I believe that by looking into these experiences, the study can help school leaders, lawmakers, and communities create supportive spaces that respect and nurture children who are left behind.

In this study, the researcher explored the experiences of siblings who assume parental responsibilities when their Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are absent. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the original and subsequent stressful events experienced by siblings taking on parental responsibilities?
2. What existing resources and strains are experienced by siblings taking on parental responsibilities?
3. What perceptions are formed by siblings in interpreting and making meaning of both the original and subsequent stressors, along with their resources and strain?
4. What adaptation processes are experienced, and how effective are such adaptations by siblings taking on parental responsibilities?

Theoretical Lens

The researcher anchored this study in the Double ABC-X Model of Family Stress and Adaptation by McCubbin and



Patterson (1983). The Double ABC-X Model is a framework that explains how families adapt to crises over time. This framework was used to understand siblings' perceptions and responses to parental absence, including initial and cumulative stressors (aA), resources used to cope (bB), and interpretations and meaning-making of the experiences (cC). By using this model, the researcher conceptualized Adaptation (xX) as a dynamic outcome of interactions among demands, resources, perceptions, and demonstrated how siblings cope with challenges in OFW households.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To find out how participants interpreted their experiences, the researcher employed a qualitative descriptive design. A simple, low-inference account of participants' experiences in their own words is provided by qualitative descriptive design (Sandelowski, 2000). The design captured and clearly described siblings' perspectives, pressures, and adaptations as they take on parental responsibilities in OFW families.

The study was conducted in Panabo City, Davao del Norte, Philippines, the participants' hometown. The large number of OFW families in this area made it an ideal setting for examining siblings' experiences of their parents' absence.

Siblings of OFWs in Panabo City who were at least 18 years old were selected for my study based on their maturity and ability to describe their experiences. Parents had to have worked abroad for at least 2 years to be eligible. Selected participants had actively taken caregiving roles. These tasks included looking after younger siblings, doing household chores, and providing emotional support. This situation enabled the study of how long-term migration affects sibling caregiving. After identifying these participants, I used purposive sampling to choose ten (10)

participants who could offer detailed experiences pertinent to the phenomenon being studied.

In this study, the researcher mainly used in-depth interviews to gather information. This method is appropriate because it allows siblings to share their experiences in their own words. Siblings can talk about their feelings and important events. It also allows the researcher to dig into meanings, feelings, and important events (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were used to explore what participants experienced, understood, and managed when they took on caregiving roles while their parents were absent for extended periods. An interview guide with open-ended questions, vetted by experts, was used to maintain consistency while allowing follow-up questions to clarify answers and deepen the conversation.

To identify and explain patterns of meaning across participants' experiences, I used thematic analysis to examine the interview data in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021). I read the transcripts several times to familiarize myself with the data, created preliminary codes for key statements, and arranged these codes into preliminary themes using the six-phase framework. The themes were examined and refined to ensure precise definitions of ideas that accurately reflected participants' experiences. This method enabled the expression of the essence of siblings' experiences as de facto caregivers in the absence of OFW parents in a methodical yet interpretive manner.

RESULTS

The researcher found five main themes in this study that are usually consistent with the Double ABC-X Model. However, the researcher also identifies new themes that diverge from the model's assumptions, suggesting that the current theoretical framework does not adequately capture certain aspects of participants' experiences.

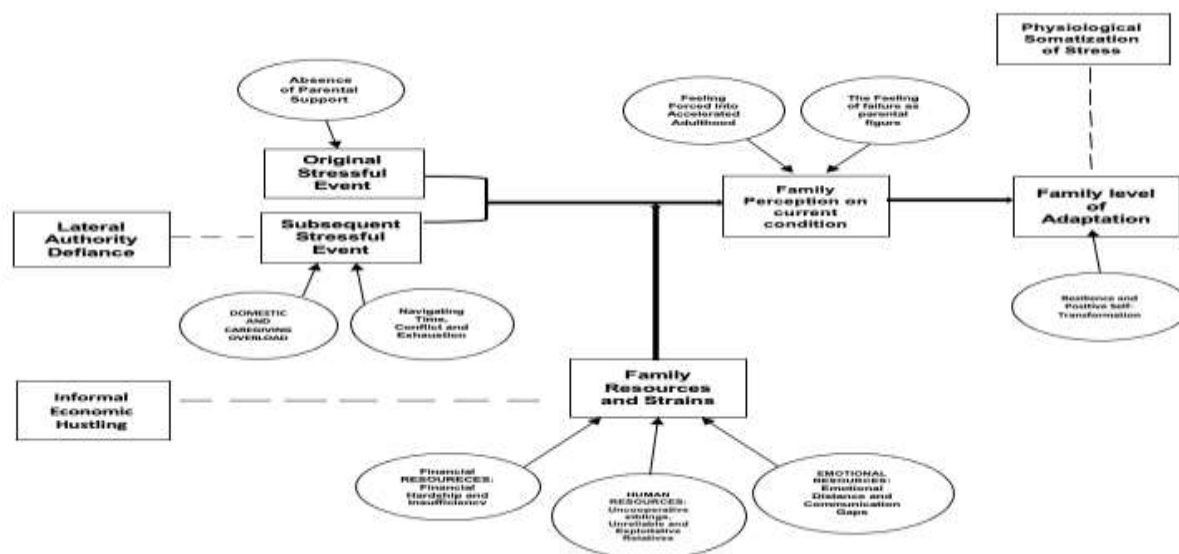


Figure 1: Emergent Themes on the Sibling Perceptions of Stress Accumulation, Coping Resources, and Adaptation in Overseas Filipino Workers' Families Original Stressful Events Experienced by Siblings Taking Parental Responsibilities (a Factor)



The researcher identified original stressful events as the earliest turning point that destabilized family structures and required immediate role reorganization among siblings. This theme established the context from which subsequent stressors emerged, with the absence of parental support as its central subtheme.

Absence of parental support. The absence of parental support was the main stressor affecting siblings' adoption of parental roles. In every instance, this absence disrupted family routines and compelled older siblings to assume caregiving responsibilities. One Participant disclosed that she and her siblings were placed in the care of their grandmother following their parents' divorce and their mother's relocation overseas. When she talked of her grandmother's passing in 2022, a long pause was observed, suggesting the sadness was still quite intense.

Our mother left my sibling and me in the care of our grandmother because my parents had already separated. However, in 2022, our grandmother also passed away. So since then, my mother has been relying on me to take care of my younger sibling. (P.A)

Additionally, Participant C's family system was initially strained by her parents' decision to travel abroad. As she told this part of her experience, I could sense the weight of contemplation in her voice, as though she had just realized the reality of their situation. She stated,

They have been abroad for almost four years... now that it is just my younger sibling and me, I have come to realize how difficult it is when your parents are not around. (P.C)

Furthermore, both parents were practically absent from Participant I's life because one was working abroad, and the other was unable to provide care. As she narrated, her voice grew strained and faltered periodically as she tried to maintain her composure while recalling a painful incident. She stated,

Our mother left us in the care of our stepfather, but the problem is that my stepfather is irresponsible and involved in illegal drugs. He is rarely at home. That is why, since I am the eldest, all the responsibilities for my younger siblings were left to me. (P.I)

The loss of parental support as the original stressful event triggers the process of sibling parentification and initiates a series of secondary stressors.

Subsequent Stressful Event Experienced by Siblings Taking Parental Responsibility (aA Factor)

After the initial disruption caused by the lack of parental support, participants experienced a series of stressful events that accumulated over time, making it more difficult for them to balance their obligations to their families and their studies.

Domestic and Caregiving Overload. Based on the participants' experiences, domestic and caregiving overload emerged as a significant subsequent stressor following the absence of parental support.

Participant C's day started with feeling very responsible. As she told me about her routine, I could see she was thinking carefully about each thing she did. Her voice grew softer with tiredness.

First, I make sure to cook before I leave and prepare packed food for my sibling. Basically, I am the one managing everything like cleaning, all the household chores, and even the bills; I handle them all. When my sibling gets sick, I am also the one who takes care of them. (P.C)

Another participant said she had a tough time dealing with too much to do at home and taking care of her siblings. When she talked about what she was going through, I could tell she was tired. She said she had to grow up way too fast. She expressed,

It feels like I am the mother, father, and older sister, like I am everything. That is when I realized, ma'am, that I am really the one doing everything. Then, when it comes to household payments, I am the one who holds the money and manages the budget. (P.E)

Similarly, Participant E talks about her life. She says her day never really ends. It is like she is always trying to catch up with time, but never really does. Participant E says her life is divided into three parts: home, school, and work. She stated,

Juggling those three is not easy because my job is very time-consuming, and school also requires a lot of time for studying, projects, and reports. And then there are also the household chores.) (P.J)

These siblings' experiences highlight that the overload of caregiving tasks functions as a persistent stressor, influencing their daily routines, educational engagement, and personal well-being.

Navigating Time, Conflict, and Exhaustion. One of the most common challenges across all of the events was the never-ending battle against time. Siblings spoke of the immense pressure they felt juggling schoolwork, home responsibilities, and part-time jobs.

Participant B's life was a constant balancing act between responsibility and exhaustion. Her voice is heavy as she speaks of the challenge of combining school and caregiving. She recalled,

I am often late. It is because of my schedule—sometimes I have to stay up late studying, especially when we have exams. There are times when I go to school without any sleep. (P.B)

Meanwhile, Participant H's experiences reflected the weight of a young life stretched to its limits. With a weary but determined voice, she admitted that her days were a constant race against time. She uttered,

I was really stressed, ma'am, because I was a working student at that time, and I was also maintaining my status as a high honors student. On top of that, there was a situation with my younger sibling, who was only 4 years old at the



time, and I was really confused about where to leave him. (P.H)

Meanwhile, the emotional toll became most evident in Participant E's heartbreaking experience, where the combination of family conflict, academic stress, and personal struggles led her to thoughts of self-harm. She expressed,

Yes, ma'am, I even told myself that it felt like I just wanted to die because everything was happening at the same time — issues with my partner, then conflicts with my siblings.) (P.E)

Beyond these model-aligned stressors, a key divergence also emerged in the form of Lateral Authority Defiance (Structural Role Inversion). This theme clearly departs from the assumptions of the Double ABC-X model. It suggests that the pile-up of stress is not just about the overlapping of responsibilities, but the failure of the sibling support system assumed by the model.

Divergence: Lateral Authority Defiance (Structural Role Inversion)

While the Double ABC-X Model states that family members are resources (bB) for stress management, the researcher found that siblings could also contribute to the stress pile-up (aA) when ages and genders were mixed. Some siblings seemed unwilling to help while their older sibling was caring for them, resulting in emotional and relational strain. This result challenged the model's assumption of an integrated family support system and highlighted the complexity of family relationships, as described by participants A and E.

His mindset is different... he is not responsible. It feels so heavy that I am the one doing the work... even though I am the younger one. (P.A)
They do not know how to listen to me, even though I am the eldest sister... They even tell me, "Don't you dare mess around, because you are the problem." (P.E)

This shows that role reversal in sibling relationships not only complicates the caregiving process but also adds to stress, thereby expanding the explanatory scope of the Double ABC-X Model in the context of transnational families.

Family Existing Resources and Strains (bB Factor)

The main idea in this theme is that typical sources of support from a sibling's family become either highly unstable or even a source of stress due to parent migration. Additionally, siblings have access to a range of resources (financial, human/physical, and emotional), which can help them cope with their situation.

Financial Resources: Financial Hardship and Insufficiency. One of the biggest challenges experienced by these children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) was financial difficulties. Parents attempted to provide a solution by sending money; however, in most cases, this was insufficient to cover everyday necessities and school costs. Participant A reflected upon several instances when she believed there were not sufficient funds. She

lowered her voice while talking about it and started to fiddle with her hands in her lap.

What Mom sends us is really not enough... we are always short on what we need to spend. (P.A)

Meanwhile, the data revealed that Participant D looked forward to the first week of each month for messages from her mom about the transfer of the ₱ 4,000.00 remittances. That amount is "small" but sufficient to sustain her family's daily living needs; it was a source of some relief and, she said, also a weighty burden.

The 4,000 pesos, ma'am, is all I can budget monthly, including bills, food, rice, and groceries. (P.D)

As individuals continually juggle scarce resources while supporting their families, financial instability leads to both economic strain and emotional weariness.

Human Resources: Exploitative, unreliable, and uncooperative siblings. Participants stated that their human resources, particularly recalcitrant siblings and untrustworthy or opportunistic relatives, frequently caused them extra stress. While some family members exploited the participants' efforts, others refused to share household chores. One Participant bemoaned the strain she had experienced, her voice quivering. She said,

When I get home, I find our house very messy, the dishes unwashed, and he has not done anything. There is even laundry left undone. I feel so confused, ma'am. Why is my older brother like that, relying on me when I am still studying? When it comes to our relatives, I do not receive any support from them. Our family is toxic, ma'am. (P.A)

In a similar vein, Participant E observed increased conflict and emotional estrangement among her siblings after being forced to take on parental duties. As the oldest, she felt challenged, questioned, and emotionally alone rather than acknowledged as a caregiver. She said,

My older siblings at home cannot be relied on anymore, as they already have their own world. They tend to look down on me... they make me feel that we are struggling because I am in college. (P.E)

In the meantime, Participant H complained about what she saw as manipulative or exploitative actions from relatives. When her parents left to work abroad, she initially expected her grandmother and aunts to provide comfort and stability. Instead, she experienced their support as conditional, tied to the financial assistance her parents sent. I observed her palm clench tightly and her voice tremble with anger as she recalled her grandmother's complaints about the money. She said bitterly,

My grandmother got angry because she said 8,000 was not enough. So, I confronted my grandmother. My grandmother said, "Fine, then find someone else to take care of your sibling...." It felt like they were forced to do it, ma'am, because of the money Mom was sending. (P.H)



Human resources were shown to be major contributors to strain rather than sources of relief throughout participants' experiences. When combined, they demonstrate how the burden of parental responsibility increases when family members are exploitative or untrustworthy.

Emotional Resources: Emotional Distance and Communication Gaps. Participants stated that communication with their OFW parents often centered on surface-level updates rather than genuine emotional exchanges.

One participant said that when his parents left for work abroad, all their conversations felt chilly and detached, more like polite exchanges than deep ones. As he spoke, I could see a subtle pain reflected in his eyes. He recalled,

When we video call, I nod, and the communication feels very cold. (P.G.)

On the other hand, Participant D shared a similar experience. I see how she carried her hardships quietly, choosing to filter what she shared to keep her mother's heart light, even while hers bore the weight of loneliness.

I do not really open up to her about my difficulties here because I do not want her to feel sad or worried. (P.D.)

Extending the investigation into these themes, siblings did not remain passive in the face of deficiencies in remittances or emotional support; rather, they shifted from relying on outside help to providing support themselves. This pattern deviates from the explanation provided by the theory.

Divergence: Proactive Agency in Informal Economic Hustling

Remittances are frequently perceived as the main source of income for transnational families. The data, however, revealed a departure from this presumption, shifting from reliance to proactive agency. In response to inadequate financial support, siblings actively produced extra resources (bB). From this, it is argued that adaptation involves both proactive agency and the use of available resources.

Despite her youth and academic obligations, Participant A demonstrated this by accepting a part-time job.

Regarding the lack of money, ma'am, I work part-time at a laundry shop in Barangay San Vicente. (P.A)

Similarly, Participant C recounted being compelled to secure educational support when remittances were temporarily unavailable:

During her first 3 months abroad, she could not send anything... that is why I was forced to apply for this scholarship.

From this, the researcher contended that adaptation involved proactive agency as well as the utilization of available resources, especially among siblings who took on adult-like tasks. By demonstrating that coping resources were actively developed and utilized, this research expanded on the Double ABC-X

Model and suggested a more dynamic process of family adaptation.

Family Perceptions of the Current Situation (cC Factor)

This theme encapsulates how siblings perceived and navigated their new family roles after their parents' migration. Their experiences show an internal conflict molded by the emotional burden of attempting to maintain family life in the absence of parental figures, premature responsibility, and ongoing self-evaluation.

Feeling Forced into Accelerated Adulthood. Participants talked about being pulled into adult tasks earlier than they had anticipated, managing finances, providing care, and leading the home while continuing their schooling. A sense of lost youth, forced adulthood, and hesitant acceptance of obligations they felt compelled to take on were all evident in their experiences.

Participant I was tone when she spoke of abruptly assuming parental responsibilities, as though she were still unable to comprehend how rapidly her childhood had given way to adult responsibilities. She described,

You feel shocked because, of course, you are still young and you still need your parents' guidance... then you suddenly realize you already have so many obligations. The responsibilities that should have been your parents' are now on you. (P.I)

Moreover, Participant D spoke with firmness, yet beneath her was holding back emotions long kept inside, perhaps anger, perhaps sadness; she expressed,

It is not fair, ma'am, because I am carrying very heavy responsibilities even though I am still young, but I have to step up because I am the eldest. (P.D.)

Similarly, Participant G reflected on his early confusion about what "responsibility" truly meant; he spoke softly, almost cautiously, as though revisiting a period of uncertainty that still unsettled him. He uttered,

At first, I really did not know what to do, ma'am, because I was not used to the term 'responsibility'... but since my parents did not leave it to anyone else, I was forced to handle it.) (P.G)

In all their experiences, the participants described an unplanned, sudden, and overwhelming shift into adult roles. In addition to the pressure to "step up" for their siblings in the absence of parental figures, their testimonies revealed shock, perplexity, and a sense of injustice. They were forced to take on duties and bear the practical and emotional obligations usually associated with adulthood despite their young age.

Feeling of Failure as a Parental Figure. Participants frequently voiced concerns about their suitability as stand-in parents, particularly in situations involving disagreements, money problems, or the struggles of younger siblings. As they compared themselves to their parents' expectations, which they believed they could not fully meet, they experienced guilt, frustration, and self-blame.



Participant F told how she felt she had failed as the elder sister when her youngest sibling stopped attending school, her voice shook with remorse and guilt as she clenched her hands and weeping eyes, she spoke.

I really blamed myself, ma'am. I mean, I keep blaming myself, because now it seems like she has no plan for her life. I have really been blaming myself up until now. (P.F.)

Another participant expressed a deeper emotional struggle. She described how, despite her efforts to fulfill her role as the eldest, she often felt unseen and unheard at home. She lamented,

I feel like I am no longer the eldest at home, like I am not the guardian of the house. They rely on the fact that they already have a job, and they feel they are superior, so they do not listen to me, even though I am the eldest. (P.E.)

These perceptions of accelerated adulthood and inadequacy as substitute parental figures highlight the emotional strain in the siblings' experiences. While reflecting the burdens they carry within the family system, they also provide a basis for understanding how they respond and adjust to these demands over time.

Resilience and Positive Self-Transformation (xX Factor)

This final theme captures how participants developed resilience, adaptability, and optimism despite assuming parental roles at a young age.

Participant C shared her reflections with a calm, and a faint smile appeared on her face—one that carried both humility and strength. She said thoughtfully,

I feel grateful because I got to experience it; it humbled me. I learned to strive for ourselves. I learned how to survive and manage life even without our parents. (P.C.)

Meanwhile, as Participant F recalled her experiences in 2023, when her younger sibling was involved in a large investment scam and had no relatives to rely on, she and her siblings became each other's protectors. She spoke not from bitterness, but from a place of growth. She added,

For me, despite the struggles, all that we went through, being abandoned, getting scammed, it made me more independent. (P.F.)

Similarly, Participant A reflected on how her experiences shaped her into the person she is today. Her expression softened as she spoke, revealing not bitterness but pride in her own growth.

The experiences in my current situation, ma'am, help me become a mature, independent, and responsible person. (P.A.)

Meanwhile, after a moment of silence, Participant C leaned slightly forward, her expression thoughtful, as if the many trials she and her family had faced had become stepping stones that shaped a stronger, more grounded version of herself. She expressed,

My outlook on life has become stronger, ma'am, because of these experiences. (P.C.)

The participants' experiences demonstrate that they gained resilience, wisdom, and a stronger sense of purpose as a result of suffering and strain. Even though individuals appear resilient on the outside, this adaptation frequently conceals a serious internal physical toll. The model's concept of Bonadaptation is called into question by this disparity between physical health and social achievement.

Divergence: Physiological Somatization of Stress (Biological Maladaptation)

The paradigm emphasizes psychological adjustment and the restoration of family balance following stress, framing adaptation as a continuum from maladaptation to bonadaptation. This is made more difficult by the manifestation of Physiological Somatization of Stress, in which participants may seem to be well-adapted at the family level but suffer from physical and mental disintegration at the individual level.

Participants B and E's statements make this clear.

That was the time I was attacked by depression... I would go to school without sleep. (P.B.)

I become stiff, my hands and mouth tense up, and I cannot control them. My legs straighten, and my menstruation is not normal. (P.E)

This expands on the Double ABC-X Model by emphasizing that adaptation outcomes must account for the biological and embodied effects of prolonged stress, as well as social ones, especially for people who assume more significant roles without parental support.

Summary of the Findings

The findings revealed that siblings who assume parental responsibilities experience multiple interconnected stressors beginning with the absence of parental support, followed by domestic and caregiving overload, challenges in balancing time, conflict, and exhaustion, with Lateral Authority Defiance emerging as a divergence from the Double ABC-X Model. Their available resources are often constrained by financial hardship, uncooperative siblings, unreliable and exploitative relatives, and emotional distance and communication gaps. At the same time, Informal Economic Hustling emerged as an additional coping resource beyond the model. These experiences shape perceptions of being forced into accelerated adulthood and feelings of inadequacy or failure in fulfilling a parental role. Despite these challenges, siblings demonstrate resilience and positive self-transformation as key adaptation processes; however, Physiological Somatization of Stress also surfaced as a divergence, highlighting the physical manifestations of prolonged caregiving stress. Overall, the findings illustrate the complex and evolving realities of sibling caregivers as they navigate overlapping stressors, limited resources, meaning-making, and adaptation.



DISCUSSION

Stressors and Lateral Authority Defiance in Sibling Caregiving

Conversations with the study participants were enlightening. The researcher learned that the original and subsequent stressful events experienced by siblings taking on parental responsibilities are the absence of parental support, Domestic caregiving overload, navigating time, conflict, and exhaustion. Moreover, these findings affirmed the study by Walsh (2016), which explains that when parental figures are absent or unable to function, children often assume premature caregiving roles, resulting in role overload, emotional exhaustion, disrupted family authority structures, and chronic stress from competing responsibilities. Similarly, the researcher's findings support Pearlin et al. (1990), who explained that primary and secondary stressors, including household role overload, strongly shape caregiving stress. However, divergence from theory emerged through Lateral Authority Defiance. This finding contradicts Boss (2002), who argued that in situations of parental absence, families experience boundary ambiguity. However, sibling caregiving systems often reorganize with adaptive role acceptance rather than resistance to authority.

Resource Strains and Informal Economic Hustling in Sibling Caregiving Adaptation

Moreover, the existing resources and strains experienced by siblings taking on parental responsibilities include financial resources (financial hardship), human resources (uncooperative siblings, unreliable and exploitative relatives), and emotional resources (emotional distance and Communication Gaps). These findings supported the study by Aldridge & Becker (1993), which found that children and siblings who provide care within families often experience financial hardship and household poverty, a lack of reliable or supportive family members, including siblings and extended relatives, emotional isolation, communication breakdowns, and invisibility of their caregiving role. In Addition, this study affirms Darabos & Faust (2023), who stated that young and family caregivers experience significantly higher financial strain, reduced emotional well-being due to caregiving demands, and limited family support systems. However, a divergence from the model was identified through informal economic hustling. The researcher's findings contradicted Becker's (2007) study, which states that while young careers face poverty and hardship, they are rarely engaged in sustained or organized informal income-generating activities.

Accelerated Adulthood and Parental Role Failure Perceptions in Sibling Caregiving

Furthermore, siblings who take on parental responsibilities perceive themselves as forced into accelerated adulthood. According to Tong et al. (2024), emerging young caregivers who take on parental obligations undergo a crucial process of navigating accelerated adulthood and feeling "more like an adult than peers" due to caregiving pressures, which can validate feelings of failure as a parent. Similarly, the researcher's findings affirm Stamatopoulos (2018), who suggested that

children in caregiving roles often report prematurely assuming adult responsibilities, experiencing an emotional burden from acting as substitute parents, and feeling inadequate and doubtful about their caregiving competence. However, the researcher contradicted the findings of Kelada et al. (2021), indicating that hastened adulthood may be perceived as beneficial maturity rather than as forced identity loss, and that caregiving does not always lead to feelings of failure.

Resilience, Self-Transformation, and Physiological Somatization in Sibling Adaptation

Lastly, the adaptation process experienced by siblings is resilience and positive self-transformation. These results support the findings of Cleofas et al. (2021), which found that family members enhance coping strategies during parental absence, build resilience in handling family disruptions, adopt adaptive emotion regulation, and take on new roles despite separation and emotional strain. In Addition, the researcher's findings support Paculan & Elivera (2025), who stated that Filipino young adults experiencing parentification demonstrated resilience and meaning-making despite hardship and developed a sense of maturity and personal growth from caregiving roles. However, a divergence emerged in the form of Physiological Somatization of Stress. This demonstrates how individual biological maladaptation is frequently concealed by external familial stability (bonadaptation). Parentified youth had far greater rates of somatic complaints, such as persistent weariness and sleep difficulties, according to recent research (Mao et al., 2020). According to Narchal and Hembrow (2024), this individual depletion implies that a high biological cost for the caregiver may be associated with successful family adaptation. Since chronic physiological wear happens even when social duties are met, these hidden costs ultimately call into question the model's concept of success (Aguila et al., 2023).

Implications

Based on these findings, school heads may review current policies to better support students in parental roles by implementing flexible learning arrangements, such as adjustable deadlines, more flexible attendance, and modulated tasks. It is important to ensure strong support systems that recognize and prioritize the needs of young caregivers.

Future Directions of the Study

Future research may include multiple linear regression, mediation, and moderation analyses. These methods can help examine how initial and subsequent stressful events, family resources, and strains relate to family perceptions and adaptation. In addition, qualitative research may be conducted to explore further and validate emerging themes that diverge from existing theory, specifically Lateral Authority Defiance, Informal Economic Hustling, and Physiological Somatization of Stress. Lastly, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) may be conducted to develop and validate survey instruments measuring original and subsequent stressful events, family resources and strains, family perception of current condition, and family level of adaptation.



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Ethical Consideration

To maintain the ethical standards of this research, all participants were clearly informed about the study's purpose, the methods used, potential risks, and their rights, including the choice to withdraw at any time without consequences. To protect their anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned (Participants 1-10), and any identifying details that could reveal their personal backgrounds were removed. Throughout the research process, a record was kept to document decisions, data management, and analytical methods, ensuring transparency, accountability, and integrity. All recordings, transcripts, and field notes are kept confidential and handled in accordance with the guidelines of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declared no conflicts of interest related to this study. The research was conducted with honesty, fairness, and neutrality. This ensured that the outcomes were derived solely from the collected data and the research aim. This claim highlights the researchers' dedication to ethical standards, transparency, and the trustworthiness of the study's results.

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