

Theory and Practice in Child Development

https://tpicd.org

E-ISSN: 2791-9943

Volume: 4 Issue: 2 2024

pp. 86-113

Exploring Parental Expectations on Children Helping Parents out in Lower Middle-Income Families

Justine Jewell Casilan*a & Tito Baclagana

* Corresponding author **E-mail:** casilan.jj@pnu.edu.ph

a. Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Philippine Normal University, Manila, Philippines

Article Info

Received: August 9, 2024 Accepted: November 23, 2024 Published: December 30, 2024



10.46303/tpicd.2024.12

How to cite

Casilan, J. J., & Baclagan, T. (2024). Exploring Parental Expectations on Children Helping Parents out in Lower Middle-Income Families. *Theory and Practice in Child Development*, 4(2), 86-113.

https://doi.org/10.46303/tpicd.2024.

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ABSTRACT

Helping parents out is the top priority of Filipino youth. Helping out is the act of children giving services or resources to make it easier for parents to support the family. The objective of this study is to determine what are the expectations of parents from lower middle-income families regarding the idea of children helping out their parents. This study also aims to know how parents identify a child who is capable of helping, what are the reasons why children will help their family out, and what kind of support they will provide. To attain the purpose of the study, exploratory research was conducted. Parents with two or more children belonging to the lower middle-income class residing in NCR, Region III, and Region IV-A served as this study's participants. Using thematic analysis, the findings revealed that helping out is a non-obligatory practice. Children must first have a number of essential characteristics before being classified as a child capable of helping out. Parents also outlined various reasons and means by which children will help out. This study may offer a new framework for understanding how helping out parents is perceived by Filipinos in the current times.

KEYWORDS

Helping out; lower middle-income families; parents; children.

INTRODUCTION

Helping out is the act of children giving services or resources to make it easier for parents to support the family. The top priority of Filipino youth in this generation is to help their parents and siblings financially (Magsambol, 2022). In the Philippines, reciprocal action, as well as service and loyalty, are values that maintain the relationship of Filipino families (Tarroja, 2010). From this conviction, an unwritten rule was established that since parents have provided for their children's basic needs, later on, the children are expected to take care of their elderly parents. When the time comes for members of the family to move out and live separately from them, they must work hard to keep the ties alive (Peterson, 1993, cited in Blair, 2014).

The concept of filial obligation and responsibility operates deeply in the Philippines. Even at relatively young ages, children are expected to make the best possible contribution to the family. Older kids are frequently expected to take care of their younger siblings' needs. Enriquez (2022) explained that this phenomenon happens because of the gender roles of their parents, with mothers being carers and fathers being providers. Being the eldest, they are expected to act like their parents. Children, on the other hand, are expected to perform well at school because of the involvement of their parents. Given the idea that eldest siblings need to take on the role and responsibilities of their parents, it is not surprising that after they graduate, or if, unfortunately, they were not able to attain this educational achievement, when they are at the right age to meet the age qualification of many jobs, they will immediately look for a job to support the family. Tarroja (2010) pointed out that when one family member rises to the occasion of difficulty, the one who takes care of the family or comes to the rescue of the family will help in supporting or providing for the family. Resiliency, a value that is innate to Filipinos, children can easily adjust to accepting new roles and responsibilities within the family, such as helping out.

The practice of helping out is not only common in the Philippines but also in other cultures. East Asian countries including China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, continue to have a strong sense of filial attitudes. Even at this moment, Chinese and Taiwanese culture still believe in the notion that children must strive to do something that will honor their parents and this can be done through financial support, emotional support, co-residence, caregiving, and personal matters (Su, 2014). South Korean young adults want to help out as an expression of love, care, and respect towards their parents. They see their parents as their role models and they are academically motivated because they want to help out and perform their filial duties (Tam, 2016).

Helping out is also a behavior observed in Middle Eastern countries. Turkey, for example, is a very family-oriented country. Turkish women exhibit a greater willingness to help out and care for their parents. Both material and emotional filial obligation attitudes exist in Turkish culture, primarily driven by relatedness and psychological values attributed to children, stressing mutual and tight parent-child relationships (Tasdemir, 2024). In South Asian countries like Bangladesh and India, helping out and family support are so strong to the point that

lawmakers have established laws for filial responsibility. The regulation in Bangladesh stipulates that all adult children must give their parents a "logical amount of money" for maintenance from their earnings, while the Indian policy obligates adult children and or grandchildren to maintain at least one parent or grandparent (Serrano et al., 2017). These laws or policies were created mainly due to the reason that India and Bangladesh are low- or middle-income countries where circumstances including low economic growth, poverty, and weak or non-existent pension schemes are pervasive.

The filial obligation is most common in Asian countries, however, due to the influences of ancient civilizations of Greek, Roman, and Hebrew Judaism, and the contemporary influence of Christianity, a strong sense of helping out, caring, and providing for parents are also in Western family culture. They generally hold the idea that grown children owe their parents and they possess strong feelings of gratitude and responsibility toward their parents for raising them, however, the parents have no right to demand from their children as if caring for them was a debt they need to pay (Yuan & Wang, 2011).

The idea of helping out parents is debated by people on whether it is an obligatory or non-obligatory act. Given the idea that children are willing to help out their parents on account of reasonable and valid grounds, it is necessary to bring about and hear the parents' perspective on this matter. The purpose of this study is to explore the expectations of Filipino parents from the lower middle-income class regarding the idea of children helping out their parents. This also aims to determine how they view the idea of children helping out and how they identify a child capable of helping. Although there are varying perspectives about family values, parent-child relationships, parental expectations, and children's appreciation due to cross-cultural differences, this study is integral not only to the field of Family Psychology, Philippine Psychology, and Philippine studies but also to promoting a cross-cultural discussion on how various cultures view the role of children in helping out their parents. This study will challenge assumptions about how helping families out should be fulfilled, which will open up new ways of thinking about family relationships and support, and address global family and aging issues.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to determine how parents view the idea of children helping out their parents, the researcher used qualitative research. Qualitative research is a methodology that explores real-life situations and offers a more in-depth understanding of a phenomenon through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. To explore the expectations of parents regarding the idea of children helping out their parents, the exploratory research design was also utilized. This research design was used as it investigates and explores human experiences that have not been studied to obtain a rich and unrestricted discourse depicted in a textual form.

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Research Instrument

The researcher used a semi-structured interview. In a semi-structured interview, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions subsequently followed by follow-up questions to delve deeper into their answers and the research topic. Instead of following a strict and formalized list of questions, employing a semi-structured interview will provide the researcher the freedom to explore any pertinent thoughts that may come up throughout the interview while yet allowing it to remain focused on the subject of interest. The researcher came up with eight (8) questions that assessed the expectations of the participants about the practice of helping parents out in supporting the family. Follow-up questions were included to gain comprehensive and in-depth data from the participants. The following are some of the questions that were asked to the participants:

- 1. What do you think about the idea of children helping out their parents in supporting the family?
- 2. How do you identify a supporting child?
- 3. What are the reasons why children help out?
- 4. What kind of support did you provide to the child you think would help out?
- 5. In what areas do you think your children will engage in helping you out?

The questions for the interview correspond to the statement of the problem and research questions of this study. The interview questions were checked and validated by a registered guidance counselor before utilizing it for this study. Pilot testing was also conducted to refine the interview questions. Parents with two or more children are selected in the pilot testing to identify what questions will be understood and answered by the prospective participants.

Participants

The researcher gathered 10 parents coming from a lower middle-income class as research participants. Although the lower middle-income class has better living conditions than the classes under them, they remain vulnerable to falling into poverty. They were selected to see if their living conditions would affect their responses. The monthly income of the participants must be between ₱21,194 and ₱43,828 since this is the income bracket identified by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies for lower middle-income families. The selected participants have two (2) or more children, all living in the same household, and are not yet working. The participants also reside in the National Capital Region, Region III, and Region IV-A because middle income families are heavily concentrated in Metro Manila and adjacent regions such as Central Luzon and CALABARZON (Never & Albert, 2021). This study was centered on the participants coming from lower middle-income class due to the reason that financial stability, better housing, livelihood, employment, bills & utilities, and others are still commonly faced by families coming from this type of household. This study did not include families from other socioeconomic statuses, single-parent households, and families headed by extended family members (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles...). This study did not also determine the differences between the male and female parents' characteristics, and perspectives. Purposive sampling was used in this study. This sampling method was utilized to ensure that the participants met the criteria needed in this study. The study gathered 10 participants which is large enough to gather sufficient data from the qualitative perspective of the participants but not large enough to obtain repetitive data. The researcher acknowledges the principle of saturation in research to avoid redundancy of information.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the actual interview, the potential participants were screened by asking how many children they have, where they live, and what is their estimated monthly income to see if they qualify for the study. These questions served to filter the participants. Parents who did not meet at least one of these requirements were not included in the study, while the parents who met all the requirements were accepted as study participants and shortly after received a letter confirming their informed consent. The interview was conducted online using the platforms Google Meet and Facebook Messenger, video conferencing applications that fit the convenience of the participants. The interview lasted for about 20 minutes to 1 hour. The participants were asked for permission to have the interview recorded and transcribed, converting the audio recordings into written texts for a smoother analysis process.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants were analyzed and interpreted using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a data analysis method used in qualitative research that involves reading over a data set (such as the transcripts of in-depth interviews or focus groups) and looking for patterns to derive themes and identify the underlying meaning. The audio data provided by the participants were transcribed into texts and coded to identify the themes. The coding systems that will be used are open coding, axial coding, and selective coding in order to break down codes from the transcript, cluster codes in similar themes, and create a core theme that will group the subthemes. The researcher used Google Spreadsheets as a code book to identify the core themes and subthemes of the data. The code book contains the core themes, subthemes, descriptions, and sample statements of the participants. The participants responded using the Filipino language during the interview thus, the sample statements were then translated into English.

Research Ethics

The researcher ensured that the participants' privacy and well-being were respected. Thus, the following ethical considerations: a. Informed Consent, b. Observation of Plagiarism, c. Honesty of Data, and d. Debriefing Participants were strictly followed by the researcher. In observance of the plagiarism law, the researcher used a plagiarism checker (Turnitin) which shows the percentage of plagiarized words coming from the internet as well as the percentage of uniqueness. More importantly, the researcher made sure that the information and works of various authors which helped for the betterment of this study were properly paraphrased and cited using the APA 7th edition citation style. In the case of informed consent for the circumstances of the participants, informed consents were given to the participants containing

the Republic Act no. 10173 or Data Privacy Act of 2012, permission to record and transcribe the interview, and autonomy to participate in this study. The researcher ensured that the participants were not forced to participate in any kind of activity that would potentially harm them, as well as the confidentiality of the data given by the participants. No data were shared with anybody not incorporated with the study, for those are only confidential between the participants and the researchers alone unless upheld by the law. Moreover, no data were falsified in order to collect accurate and complete information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants of the study. Half of the participants were between the ages of 44 and 47 (50%), and the majority of them (80%) were females. Six participants (60%) are living in the National Capital Region, while the remaining participants are currently living in the neighboring regions of Metro Manila notably Region III (10%) and Region IV-A (30%). All of the participants belong to the lower middle-income class, and the majority of them have a household monthly income ranging from P20,000 to P27,000 (60%), followed by participants whose household monthly income ranges from P28,000 to P35,000 (20%), whereas another 20% of the participants have a household monthly income ranging from P40,000 to P43,000 (Table 1). Moreover, six (6) participants work as housewives, one (1) works as a data processer and sales agent, one (1) as a school teacher, one (1) as a pastor, and one (1) as a freelance IT technician. The participants who work as housewives reported that even though they are housewives, they are the ones who manage the finances at home.

Table 1. (see appendix)

The study was able to discover a total of eight (8) core themes. The following tables present the core themes, subthemes, and sample statements from the participants. In determining how parents from lower middle-income class view the idea of children helping their parents out to support their family, three (3) core themes were identified: helping out is a *non-obligatory practice*, the *value of helping out*, and the *influences* of acquiring this practice. Table 2 summarizes the expectations of parents on the practice of children helping their parents out.

Parental expectations on children helping parents out

Table 2 (see appendix).

Non-obligatory practice

Parents strongly believe that children have no responsibility in helping their parents to support their family. They believe that it is a non-obligatory practice and they should not be forced or pressured into doing this action. In a household, the primary responsibilities of parents are to meet their children's basic needs, support their education, help them achieve their life goals, and ensure a bright future (Kiral, 2019). This indicates that it is not the children's obligation to help their parents, it is the parent's obligation and responsibility to support and provide for the whole family. Taking over their responsibilities and obligations in the family should never be and

will never be the obligation of their children, parents reported. While it is perceived as a non-obligatory practice, if they desire to help them, it must come from their autonomy as individuals. The concept of autonomy is typically believed to mean the ability to be one's own person, to live one's life in accordance with reasons and intentions that are considered to be one's own and not the product of manipulative or distorting other factors, and to be independent in this sense (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). They should not be obligated to do this practice because helping the family should transpire from the children's ability to make autonomous decisions in helping the family.

Value of helping out

In spite of the idea that helping parents out is a non-obligatory act, parents still see this practice as a value that should be given importance. Helping the family does not only offer better outcomes for the family, but also for other people, society, and future generations. The practice of children helping out their parents is an admirable habit, it's a practice that must be valued as it can greatly help their family especially if they are experiencing difficulties. Being able to raise a child capable and willing to help, it makes them feel glad and pleased as parents stated. Moreover, it is important to value this practice because when a person is able to help their own family, they also possess the ability to help other people. The essence and value of helping start from home. If this action is practiced and valued at home, children will also be able to display this behavior outside their homes.

Filipinos also place a great value on this practice because it is both a generational and cultural practice. The parents reported that this practice is already ingrained in the Filipino culture. Parents also view this practice as a generational custom. If children are able to understand the essence of helping, they will also be able to pass on its importance to their future families. However, one parent stated that despite being heavily ingrained in the Philippines, in some situations, although helping out is a good practice, it is being made toxic by others by pressuring, manipulating, and forcing their children into helping. Aside from these, helping parents out is an action that also gives honor to parents. When children succeed, they look back on what their parents provided. They, therefore, pay their parents back as a way to honor them (Abaya-Garcia & Reyes, 2016). If they willingly and voluntarily decide to help them, they are honoring and paying tribute to their parents as well.

Influences

Valuing the practice of children helping out their parents stemmed from different influences in life. Filipinos have observed and learned the essence of this practice from several elements in their lives namely parents, older generation, personal experiences, and other people including their siblings, friends, relatives, and other parents. The main influence in understanding the essence of this practice is the parents. Parents traditionally impart the idea of helping out to their children when they are still young. In the findings presented, parents commonly educate their children not only on the importance of helping the family in financial terms but also the other aspects which include helping with household chores, assisting their aging parents, and

the like. The practice of children helping their parents out is also observed in the older generations. Older generations were observed passing on this custom to their own families, as was indicated in the previous core theme. Parents of this generation believe that this mentality needs to be changed since parents of previous generations have formed the expectation or requirement that their children must help them out and sustain the family after graduation (Montayre, et al., 2019). This practice can be observed from other people as well including their siblings, friends, relatives, and other parents. They see that this practice is being valued by the people around them albeit not being taught by their parents in their household. It is also important to note that among these influences, most parents acquired this practice through their own experiences. Since helping parents out is a behavior that is exemplary and that should be initiated by a child's capacity to make an autonomous choice, when parents were still young, they also made the decision to help their family without external factors influencing them.

Seeing that the act of helping parents has important values and influences, there are also several reasons why children yearn to help their parents. The participants believed that there are various aspects that move children to help their parents in supporting the family. Table 2 summarizes the reasons why children are motivated to help their parents out in supporting the family. In identifying what are the reasons why children aim to help their parents, two (2) themes were identified: *motives* and *parental support*. The theme *motives* presents the factors that motivate children to take the initiative in helping out. The theme *parental support* shows the support given by parents to their children.

Table 3 (see appendix).

Reasons why children help out

There are various aspects that move children to help their parents in supporting the family. Poverty is one of the reasons why children would help out, according to parents. Families from lower middle-income class originally transitioned from low-income class (Albert, et al., 2018). The majority of them encountered problems such as low wages, unemployment, and family incapacity. Before these families made the shift, their children, particularly their eldest child, grew up experiencing poverty. For this reason, parents think that their children would help them lift them out of poverty. If not because of poverty, parents believe that they will help their parents due to their sensitivity in witnessing family struggles and well-being needs. When children witness situations in which parents struggle to provide for the family or take care of the household, children realize that those are the times when they need to take the initiative to help around their home.

One of the reasons why children aim to help their families is because of utang na loob (debt of gratitude). In the matter of Filipino families, the concept of utang na loob is always relevant. It is also one of the lexical domains of loob. Utang na loob occurs when a person benefits from the help provided by another person. Parents view utang na loob as a concept that signifies gratitude, reciprocity, and acknowledgment. Utang na loob is a trait that enables a person to express gratitude in action (Lim & Ranola, 2022). Filipino students see parents as

the first subjects of gratitude because they were their first providers (Conde and Flores, 2020), which is why utang na loob operates in the family unit. Additionally, the concept of reciprocity enters the picture when the beneficiary aims to show his or her sense of utang na loob by paying back the good deed, regardless of whether the action is taken directly or indirectly, voluntary or involuntary, of the benefactor (Rungduin, et al., 2015). Parents recognize utang na loob as one of the reasons why children would help their parents out because they believe that children acknowledge and appreciate their efforts in the family, that in the future they will repay the efforts they made for them and they will express gratitude for their good parenting and upbringing.

Like parents always tell their children, they are not getting any younger. Children want to help their families for a variety of reasons, including the fact that their parents are aging. When the parents get old, most of them get sick, and they are no longer able to work and provide for their families, as explained by parents. This prompts their children to help their parents in supporting the family, due to their concern and care for their parents as they grow old. Because they primarily rely on their children for care and safety, aging parents anticipate that their children will take care of them in times of illness (Laguna, 2021).

Parental support

Given the idea that children will acknowledge their parent's effort and good parenting, parents have given various kinds of support to their children. One of these is educational support. Educational support is the main sustenance parents provide to their children. As Blair (2014) stated, Filipino parents place great importance on supporting their children's academic goals because they see it as an investment in their children's future financial stability. For their education, parents always make sure that there is always money set aside. Parents constantly make sure that their children are fully committed to their studies by monitoring their academic progress, motivating them to succeed, and being present for their academic activities.

Moreover, parents put a lot of effort into caregiving and providing financial support for their children. In caregiving, children are taken care of by their parents to prevent illness, and they look after them on a daily basis. In terms of financial support, parents work to meet their children's fundamental necessities, with some even moving abroad to do so. It is common knowledge that better job opportunities and higher pay urged Filipino parents to work overseas (Kasilag, 2015). Furthermore, providing guidance for children is something that parents treasure as well. Parents continue to instill in their children the beliefs and values that are highly regarded in their family, including displaying good manners and kindness to others.

Interestingly, parents also acknowledged that spiritual support and availability are some of the important supports they must provide their children. Catholicism serves as one of the cornerstones of Filipino identity, spiritual and religious values are deeply rooted in Filipino families as well. Parents link different spiritual beliefs and religious engagements, such as praying, in their parenting behaviors (Jocson & Garcia, 2021). Parents believe that they would not be where they are right now if it were not for God. This is why they encourage their children

to always ask Him for guidance, whenever they have an exam, when making a decision, and when doing something significant in their lives, and to constantly give Him thanks. On the other hand, parents have a notable perspective when it comes to parental availability. Parents asserted that they should always be available to their children at all times. As their children grow and fulfill their goals, parents should always stand by their side at every significant juncture in their lives. Additionally, when parents are emotionally available to them, their children are more likely to disclose their problems with them, thus allowing emotional openness and emotional communication to occur in parent-child relationships (Pipp-Siegel & Biringen, 1998).

Since parents have already determined the potential reasons why children would help out, it is also important to look at the expectations of parents for how or in which area they will help their parents out. The parents believed that there were various areas their children would help out. Table 4 presents the areas parents think their children would help them out. In identifying what are these areas, one (1) theme was summarized in this table: *areas of helping out*.

Table 4 (see appendix).

Areas children will help out

Parents claim that their children can help out in any way they choose. Although they fall into the lower middle-class bracket, they recognize that the primary form of support their child will provide is financial support. These include paying their bills (electric, water, internet, rent, etc.) and providing food for the table. Additionally, as a member of their household, children have plans, insights, and suggestions on how to manage their home including what is best for their house, home expenditures, and family finances, which parents deem positively.

Parents also see that children can help with household chores and home upgrades. Household chores enable children to learn about self-care, home maintenance, and family responsibilities. Some advantages of performing this are the development of one's self-competence, prosocial behavior, and self-efficacy (White, et al., 2019). Furthermore, parents also believe that they can help out with home upgrades and renovations which includes purchasing appliances and other household necessities and repairing parts of their house. Parents reported that children give them assurance that they will renovate the damaged portions of their home once they are financially capable due to their first-hand experiences of the repercussions of a poorly renovated home. Another area parents recognized is sibling care. Eldest children are primarily accountable for the influences—positive or negative—that they offer to their younger siblings, they are their role models. This is why parents assert that they must set the best possible example for their siblings as they grow up (Marinas, et al., 2020).

In addition to these, some parents firmly stated that their children do not need to help with anything else but their parents' overall good health such as providing guidance, care, and support as they age but if they already have a family, they would still appreciate if they would pay them a visit from time to time. The degree to which filial norms incline children to support their parents increases when their health deteriorates (Silverstein, 2006). Parents have weaknesses and vulnerabilities as well. Through this, they will feel overjoyed if their children

will be able to caress them with love, care, and understanding. But similar to Montayre's findings (2019) that aging parents do not require their children to help because they do not want to be a burden to their children, parents still believe that this act is not mandatory because they will have other commitments and families to support too in the future.

Aside from these areas, three unique themes were also discovered namely bond strengthening, emotional aspect, and financial independence. They mentioned that their children no longer need to provide for the family, it is already fulfilling for them if their children can treat the whole family by going on a vacation, spending time together, and eating out as a family. They added that even though they already have their own families, their bond and relationship as one big happy family remains intact. In terms of the emotional aspect, the availability of their children to their parents on an emotional level brings parents happiness as well. Parents feel emotionally satisfied when they are able to open up to them and hear their children's guidance and advice on their personal matters. This makes emotional openness and communication in parent-child relationships a two-way process. Moreover, it would be a huge help for parents when their children finally become financially independent. One of the many indicators used to indicate the transition from childhood into young adulthood is financial independence (Barroso et al., 2019). According to some parents, having children work provides an opportunity to progressively increase their financial independence (LeBaron, et al., 2018). With this, the financial strain on the parents is reduced when their children no longer rely on their financial support.

The participants commonly stated that a child who is able to help their parents have certain qualities. In identifying which child is expected to help the parents, two themes were identified: *characteristics* and *birth order*. Table 5 presents two (2) core themes out of the eight themes which are *characteristics* and *birth order*.

Table 5 (see appendix).

Qualities of a child capable of helping

Characteristics

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A child who is capable of helping the parents in supporting the family has notable characteristics. Parents believe that a child who is capable of helping their parents is studious. It is a common conception among Filipinos that if their children work hard in their studies, they will be able to achieve great things in life. In a study conducted by Hsu et al. (2022), career maturity is associated with self-regulated learning since the latter acts as a mediator between perceived employability and career maturity. This implies that they may succeed in the future if they put a lot of work and effort into their studies.

Parents also recognize being financially capable as one of the characteristics of a capable child. For parents, being financially capable is obtaining a college degree, having a decent job, and having no family yet. According to them, after they obtain a college degree, they will be able to find a respectable career after they graduate. Aside from this, it is believed that if the children were not able to earn a college degree, but were able to get a job that pays them well,

then they are still capable of helping. It is also determined that those who do not have their own family yet are also financially capable of helping the family. This is because they have no one, apart from themselves, to allocate their earnings yet because they have no family to support.

Moreover, since it is believed that helping out should come from the autonomous decision of the children, this necessitates their determination to do so. Children, in order to be capable of helping, must be determined, inspired, responsible, and willing to help. Now that parents are witnessing their children's determination to help and hearing their pledges to help them when they finally have the ability, they feel confident that their children are more likely to execute this practice in the future. In addition to this, children who are capable of helping must exhibit kusang loob (willingness). Kusang loob is a lexical domain of loob. Loob is the inner being or inner self of an individual. It is the internal dimension of a person's identity. Kusa or pagkukusa is a person's volition or initiative to take action. Kusang loob, then, is a sense of initiative that emanates from within, that is unprompted by other factors. As a result of one's own choice, it is voluntary and not coerced. A person who displays kusang loob is sincere, selfless, and does not expect any rewards (Pe Pua, 2012). Other than kusang loob, kabutihang loob (kindness) is also one of the lexical domains of loob. For parents, a child who is capable of helping the parents is someone who displays kabutihang loob. A person with kabutihang loob is kind, good-natured, sincere, and has a pure heart. They also have good kapwa (shared inner self) skills (Pe Pua, 2012). The participants also claimed that kabutihang loob is taught at home, specifically by parents.

Helping out is accompanied by generosity. This implies that a person who is capable of helping their parents is someone who is generous. Parents identified a generous child as someone who understands the importance of helping as well as the idea of unconditional support, which is offering help without any reason or without the expectation of receiving anything in return. Effective parenting plays a crucial role in cultivating generosity. Parent role modeling and discussing generosity may aid in the development of this quality (Allen, 2018). Additionally, one of the characteristics of a supporting child is someone who displays or possesses maturity. Maturity occurs when people age, they broaden and extend their reach in various aspects of their lives, as their parents described it. As a result, they are becoming more aware of the significance of helping people, especially, in the family.

Out of all these characteristics, one unique quality emerged: honesty. Being honest is a remarkable characteristic of a person who is capable of helping their parents. The findings presented that parents appreciate it when their children are honest about their ability to help the family. When they are aware of what their children truly desire and are capable of, parents may feel somewhat relieved by their honesty. When children can honestly inform their parents about the responsibilities that are too heavy for them, including helping parents out in supporting the family, the emotional effort of parents to ask them about it is lessened.

Birth order

Apart from the identified characteristics, parents do not consider birth order to have an effect on which child will help them out but they have significant expectations when it comes to their birth orders. Most parents are confident that all of their children will help, regardless of birth order, because they were able to nurture them and develop a strong, healthy, and loving relationship with their children. If children decide to help their parents, it just implies that they have been good parents to their children because they will treat them right. However, the eldest children are expected to be the first children to help their parents out since they are the first children to graduate and get a well-paying job. Marinas, et al. (2020) stated that in addition to expecting their eldest child to do well in school, parents often want them to take care of their younger children in a parental capacity. On the contrary, parents recognize that the other siblings, who are the middle and youngest children, will also help them out in the future due to the reason that they tend to be the children who promise and reassure their parents that they will help them once they are financially capable.

The findings imply that parents already have expectations and ascertainment about which children will help them out voluntarily in the future. The parents are describing which child they expect to help out through the themes identified such as being studious, being determined, and having kusang loob. All of the participants said that they can see these characteristics in their children: "Nakikita ko naman ito sa kanila..." (I see these characteristics in them). Additionally, this could also mean that they chose these traits because they are those of a child they believe would be of help when they are finally capable.

The qualities identified in this study are similar to the characteristics of a *tagasalo*. *Tagasalo* is someone who is focused on being responsible and caring, a listener, a mediator, and maintaining harmony in the family (Tuazon, et al., 2021). Carandang (2001, as cited in Tuazon, et al., 2021) stated that there are two types of *tagasalo*: compulsive and non-compulsive *tagasalo*. Compulsive *tagasalo* are obligated to help out in the family, whereas non-compulsive tagasalo embrace the role but do not adhere to it rigidly. The findings of this study suggest that parents see their children more as potential non-compulsive *tagasalo* than breadwinners because aside from the similarities of characteristics identified, a *tagasalo* is unrelated to birth order and gender, which this study also shows, and there could be more than one *tagasalo* in the family, as also determined by parents.

The overall findings of this study may also suggest that parents do not see the need to expect and require their children to help them out in supporting the family because they belong to the lower middle-income bracket. As parents reported, they are still capable of covering all of their family expenses, particularly those for their children. Moreover, the findings may also indicate that families with a better socioeconomic standing are better able to develop positive parent-child relationships than families belonging to lower socioeconomic classes (Gao et al., 2022), because the parents strongly claimed in this study that they were able to foster a good

relationship and interaction with their children and nurture them with necessary parental support.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the expectations of parents on children helping out their parents to support the family. It also aimed to identify how parents recognize a child who is capable of helping, the reasons why children will help out, and the kinds of support they might provide. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that parents from lower middle-income families do not require their children to help in supporting the family. They see this practice as a non-obligatory action because it is not the responsibility of the children to provide but the parents, and if the children may desire to do so, it must emanate from their individual autonomy. The findings of this study lean more toward the Western perspective of filial attitudes than the traditional Asian perspective, emphasizing that while children may feel a moral or emotional responsibility to support their parents, this is only recognized as duties of gratitude rather than a formal debt or obligation that must be met with particular acts or claims (Yuan & Wang, 2011). This study also outlined various qualities a child must possess before being labeled as a supporting child, as well as the reasons why they will help out and the kinds of support they may provide.

The practice of children helping out their parents provides a fresh and updated perspective on how the concept of filial obligation is perceived in today's generation. The filial obligation is often viewed by Filipinos and other societies as a practice of respect and care for parents in recognition of the sacrifices they made to raise their children and for their contributions to the family and the society (Abalos, et al., 2018). This notion leads to the expectation and pressure that children must give back to their parents, which is refuted by the study's findings. The practice of helping out is also connected to the *tagasalo* personality. *Tagasalo* personality is a unique Filipino personality that describes the family member who feels responsible for the well-being of the family (Go Tian-Ng & Umandap, 2023). This study explained that since helping out is perceived as a non-obligatory practice, being a *tagasalo* in a family is a role that is also not obligatory. Thus, the study may provide an additional framework in Filipino psychology on how helping out, filial obligation, and *tagasalo* personality are viewed by the current generations.

Furthermore, since this study found that poverty and parental aging are some of the reasons why children are encouraged to help their parents, this may prompt stakeholders to provide better programs and services that target these aspects, which may include financial assistance for struggling families and health care support for parents. The findings of this study also recommend offering parents and adult children better career and employment opportunities. They may be able to fit their expenses, but they are still susceptible to unforeseen financial crises, which could put pressure on their children. In addition to these, giving outstanding educational support and programs to children is also suggested. Since it has been established that education is viewed as the primary predictor of children's future success, there is a greater chance they will be able to achieve this if, in addition to the support provided by

their parents, they are also able to experience an improved learning environment, educational assistance, and education system offered by the stakeholders.

Aside from these, it is also recommended that programs and services such as seminars which may be led by institutions including schools, LGUs, and NGOs, and counseling services focusing on family therapy, must be conducted and strengthened in the community, which are proven to improve parent-child relationships, interactions, and communication.

Based on this conclusion, future researchers are also urged to determine how children helping out their parents are perceived by families belonging to other socioeconomic groups, as well as the perspectives of children regarding this practice. The distinctive themes found in this study, such as the child's honesty in helping out, helping out to strengthen the bond, helping out in emotional aspects, and helping out in the context of children's financial independence, might inspire other researchers to conduct additional studies that will solidify the claims of this study. Lastly, they are encouraged to identify if there are differences between the findings of this study and the aspects that have not been tackled in this paper.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. *Characteristics of the participants*

Characteristics		Participants (n=10)
Age	40-43	3 (30%)
	44-47	5 (50%)
	48-51	1 (10%)
	52-55	-
	56-59	1 (10%)
Gender	Male	2 (20%)
	Female	8 (80%)
	National Capital Region	า
Location	(Metro Manila)	6 (60%)
	Region III (Central Luzon)	1 (10%)
	Region IV-A (CALABARZON)	3 (30%)
Household monthly income	P20,000-P23,000	3 (30%)
	P24,000-P27,000	3 (30%)
	P28,000-P31,000	1 (10%)
	P32,000-P35,000	1 (10%)
	P36,000-P39,000	-
	P40,000-P43,000	2 (20%)
Work	Housewife	6 (60%)
	Sales Agent	1 (10%)
	School Teacher	1 (10%)
	Freelance IT Technician	1 (10%)
	Pastor	1 (10%)

Table 2.Parental expectations on children helping out their parents in supporting the family

Core Themes Sub-ther	nes Description	Sample Statement
Non- Parental obligatory Obligation practice	rather it	help the family, toward their parents. As is the parent's parents, it is our responsibility to support and to ensure they finish their

their studies and graduated from college, they have no responsibility to take over by sending their siblings to school or providing for us just because we helped them graduate, no... it is not like that. They should build their careers for themselves, save money for themselves, and become successful in life for themselves." (P3)

Autonomy

Children's ability to make an "Perhaps, how you raised your autonomous decision in child will reflect in their helping the family actions—it will be up to them

actions—it will be up to them to decide whether to help you or not... If you were a good parent, your child will likely return the favor positively."
(P9)

Value of Admirable helping out practice

Helping parents is a admirable habit to practice

an "Of course, it's a big help. As a parent, it's a huge help if a child decides to help their this parents... applies generally, right? It eases the burden on parents, especially when their children have graduated, because, naturally, when the children graduate, the parents are also aettina older, nevertheless, we feel a sense of pride for having helped them reach that milestone. So, if they decide to help their parents, it's a big help, and it really makes a difference

when they provide financial assistance to the family. I'm okay with that, I'm okay with it." (P9)

Importance of Helping the parents is also "Helping out begins at home.

Helping Others practicing the importance of So when a child learns to help helping other people their parents and siblings, they take that mindset with them into the world and become helpful to other people as well." (P3)

Cultural Helping the parents is a "This kind of practice can practice cultural practice sometimes become toxic. But since it's part of our culture, many people say it should be valued. However, if it becomes a toxic mindset where it's treated as an obligation, I am not to support that kind of

Generational Helping parents is practice generational practice

a "Of course! Why? Because the time will come that they will have their own family. So it's a good practice for them to help their own family if they are capable and if they decide to do so... it's a practice... So... for me, I just want to emphasize that I don't need to compel my children to help us, but it's beneficial for them to bless their family because it will come back to them in return... and soon, when they finally have their own children in the future, they will value the same practice." (P9)

belief." (P4)

Expression of Helping the parents is a way "Because, as children, it's honor to honor their parents stated in the Bible that you should honor your family as a way of showing gratitude, or because they are the parents who contributed to your success in life. Therefore, children should also value

Influences Parents

Taught by parents

"From my parents, they taught me that once I get a job, I should help my family. That's a good principle, but for me, it's not obligatory. I won't force my child to help out just because they've graduated and started working; it's up to them to decide if they want to help" (P1)

that." (P7)

Older generation

A common practice of older "I didn't learn this myself, but generations I see it in previous

it see in previous generations... They have this mindset that you need to help out, but not everyone thinks this way. Some parents believe that once they have educated their children, those children should then help out. However, this was not taught to me by my parents; I only observe it in others and from older generations." (P4)

Personal experience

Learned through personal experience

personal "Uh... it's probably based on my own experience... and my experience with my parents, as they never obligated me to

help them. But this is something I also pass on to my children. Personally, when I started working, it became natural for me to contribute, even in small ways. I'd say, 'Oh, mother... let me at least help with the water bill,' since it's one of the smallest expenses. I do this because I understand and appreciate what my parents did for me and my siblings." (P9)

Other people Observed from the influences "Some of it comes from our of people around them experiences with our parents

"Some of it comes from our experiences with our parents when they were still alive. Additionally, it may also be influenced by the support of friends or relatives." (P10)

Table 3.Reasons why children help their parents out to support the family

Core Themes	Subthemes	Description	Sample Statement
Motives	Poverty	Overcome poverty	"Due to poverty. They can see how hard things are these days. They experience the struggle themselves." (P1)
	Sensitivity	sensitivity in witnessing family struggles	They see our struggles For example, with household chores—when I'm tired from work, they end up doing it. Even if I don't ask them to, if I can't take care of things because I'm exhausted from work, they take care of each other." (P3)
	Utang na	Expression of	F

	loob (debt of gratitude)	•	"Perhaps it's because of how they were raised and cared for by their parents, so they feel a sense of returning that care. It's not about obligation but rather utang na loob (debt of gratitude). They see the situation and, out of gratitude, they choose to help." (P5)
	Aging parents		"Perhaps children see that some parents are getting old and no longer working, which might make them feel the need to support their parents. As parents age and face health issues, children may want to help out of a sense of responsibility and care." (P7)
Parental support	Educationa I support	Parental support to education	"Of course, as he's studying and covering his tuition, we make sure to prepare for every payment. We allocate money
			specifically for his education and provide him with an allowance and other support." (P7)
	Caregiving	care to meet the basic	provide him with an allowance
	Caregiving Financial support	care to meet the basic necessities of the children Providing	provide him with an allowance and other support." (P7) "I take care of them by waking up early. I support them with cooking, preparing their meals,

	their decisions	"I guide them in developing good behavior and attitudes so they grow up to be good people and show kindness to others." (P6)
Spiritual support	spiritual beliefs to children.	"Spiritually. We always pray for him to finish his studies. We emphasize the importance of regularly praying to God and seeking guidance, especially before exams or tasks. I always remind him to pray before starting anything and not to forget to pray."
Availability	emotional availability to their children.	"I make myself always available for them. Ask them about all their milestones and life journey as they grow up; I am there, as their father, for them too, not just their mother." (P9)

Table 4.Qualities of a child who is capable of helping the parents in supporting the family

Core Themes	Subthemes	Description	Sample Statement
Characteristics	Studious	Hardworking at school	"Studious, diligent, intelligent so they can achieve greater things" (P1)
	Financially capable	capable is obtaining a college degree, having a	"A child has the ability to support their family when they are able to graduate, get a stable job, and not married yet." (P6)
	Determined	•	"I think when they are responsible, you can see their willingness to help. If they truly decided to support you, for example, with my children, I've

trained them in house cleaning so they show responsibility and willingness to help." (P3)

loob Practicing kusang loob "I believe support is... once they Kusang (willingness) (willingness)

get a job... it should be given willingly, right? Helping out shouldn't be something they are obligated to perform-it should come from their own volition. That's really the point. I won't obligate them to help; it should be a voluntary act." (P5)

Generous

Having the ability to "I think it's a good attitude to understand the value of have the habit of giving. When help and offer you learn to give, especially in unconditional help terms of helping, when you are mature enough to understand the importance of helping, it's an admirable trait because you don't expect anything in

return." (P9)

Kabutihang **loob Practicing** (kindness) loob (kindness)

kabutihang "Being a kind and responsible child starts at home, in your own household. Wherever they thev carry these go, characteristics with them." (P8)

Matured

maturity

Possessing and showing "For example, with my eldest, given her current status as a student, she understands the family's needs. At such times, when your children understand the importance of things like financial needs, I see that she is ready to help. It's not an obligation for her because she family's understands the

			situation, so it becomes more automatic. I think that's the best sign that they are ready to help their family when they truly understand the importance of the family's financial situation." (P9)
	Honest		"First of all, they should be honest. If they have a problem, they should open up to us so we can discuss and resolve it." (P10)
Birth order	Eldest	first children to	"The eldest child because she will be the first to graduate, she will be the first to get a job so I think she'll be the first one to help us out if she chooses to." (P1)
	Other siblings	born children often	"Ah, my second child. Based on our conversations, he has plans already. They mention these plans to us that once he graduates, he'll do it." (P5)
	All children	All children of the family will help their parents	"All of them, of course. My children are kind and it actually depends on how you raise them. How you raise your children reflects on how they will treat you. You can see if you've been a good parent by the way your children think and behave, right?" (P8)

Table 5.Areas children would help out

Core Themes	Subthemes	Description	Sample Statement

Areas of helping	Household	Helping with	"Currently that they are still with me at
out	chores	household chores	home, it's mainly about handling household chores—cooking, doing laundry, and taking care of the younger sibling" (P1)
	Financial aspect	•	"Perhaps with bills and groceries My eldest shares her thoughts about the household. She talks about what she wants to do, what's practical, and what might be better for our home and our lives." (P3)
	Bond strengthening	leisure activities to	"Actually, they don't really need to provide financially or pay for bills they can just treat us, treat some meals for the whole family, these are enough for me." (P4)
	Home upgrades	• .	"Maybe here at home. There are still many things we need to fix. They always say that they want these things to be repaired." (P2)
	Emotional aspect	support and	"Probably having a positive outlook on everything especially, when we are going through tough times. We all have weaknesses, even us, parents. We would be pleased if they would help us in these situations by showing us love and understanding." (P6)
	Good health	_	"Maybe by guiding us taking care of us, living with us when we grow old, and things like that. But if the time that they already have their own family comes, they can just visit us but not help us anymore. Just show they are still there for us." (P5)
	Sibling care	care in the	"By helping not only his parents but also other people, especially his siblings. Act as a role model for your

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siblings." (P8)

Financial Financial "It would be a great help when they independence independence graduate and are able to get a decent lessens the financial job. They will gain financial expenditure of the independence once they finish their

family studies." (P10)