

Parent-Child Relationship: Life Narratives of Elderly Parents as Care Receiver

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ABSTRACT

Background: As children age, caring for their parents becomes a significant responsibility. In line with this, all parents as they age also undergo drastic life role shifts in their lives. From parents' responsibility of caring for their children to children's responsibility of caring for their parents. In the Philippines, an adult child shouldering the responsibility of being their caregiver is normal as it is a Filipino cultural trait that can be traced to the Filipino culture of "utang na loob."

Methods: To further explore and understand this concept, this study utilized a qualitative narrative inquiry design that focuses on understanding the life narratives of Filipino elderly parents regarding the parent-child relationship and care being a care receiver. A semi-structured and open-ended one-on-one interview was conducted with 5 Filipino elderly parents eligible for the participant's criteria of this study.

Results: The findings showed that the development of the parent-child relationship from the role of parents as care providers until it shifts to being a care receiver, influences the type and quality of care the caregiver provides. Moreover, most Filipino elderly parents regardless of sex prefer their daughters as their primary caregivers as they elicit more caregiving behavior, unlike their sons.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the parent-child relationship plays a significant role in the care elderly parents receive from their adult childcare providers. Moreover, elderly parents consider caring for them as their children's obligation towards them.

Keywords: Care; Parent and child relationship; Elderly parent; Care receiver; Care provider

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INTRODUCTION

Care is a fundamental aspect of human existence that encompasses compassion, empathy, and attentiveness toward the well-being of oneself and others. The word care entails a positive notion of the world. It is the process of protecting someone or something and providing what the person or thing needs (1). Similarly, according to the Oxford Dictionary, it is the provision of what must be provided for someone's or something's health, welfare, maintenance, and protection (2). A willingness to devote time, attention, and concern is essential for caregiving since it improves interpersonal relationships and enhances the quality of life. Thus, care is the foundation of harmonious relationships and the development of compassion in a person's life.

Caring for parents is a significant responsibility that usually comes as they age, which requires additional care and support. Looking back, it is the parent's responsibility to take care of their children when they are a child, but as they age, there is a concept that their children will be the ones to care for them. This concept is known as a filial obligation, and it may be seen in Filipino culture, which is marked by their commitment to filial norms and strong family relationships (3). Many Filipinos believe each family member is responsible for specific duties and responsibilities. To respect others properly and maintain harmony within the family, it is important to carry out one's obligations (4). One of the observed responsibilities is to care for each family. Parents care for their children after giving birth and supporting them as they grow older. In return, adult children care for their parents as they get older.

Filial Obligations

In the study of Finley et al (5), filial obligations refer to the obligation attitudes which focus on predicting contact with elderly parents and providing care to them. The care provided to them by their family includes daily personal assistance on their needs to ensure their parental well-being and health (6). Moreover, filial obligations are viewed as a product of a person's social and structural world (5). In classical Confucianism culture, for instance, caring for elderly parents towards the end of life is more important than ensuring parental well-being when parents are healthy (6).

Locally, the filial obligation is included in the Filipino culture of "utang na loob," this is a deeply embodied idea of most Filipino parents.

Utang Na Loob (Debt of Gratitude)

In the year 1613, the word "utang na loob" was first published in the dictionary called "Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala," authored by a Franciscan Parish Missionary named Pedro de San Buena Ventura. Father Pedro then translated the word "utang na loob" in Español as "obligacion". Meanwhile, the English translation of "obligacion" is "obligation" which originated from the Latin word "obligare." The Latin word "obligare" consists of "ob" which means "towards" and "ligare" which means "to bind," in English. In simple words, "utang na loob" denotes that the person indebted (pinautangan) and the debtor (pinagkakautangan) are bound to each other (7). Moreover, looking at the development of progress in the language and terms used shows the long existence of "utang na loob," among Filipinos.

"Utang na loob" is a Filipino cultural trait that can be perceived negatively and positively, depending on a person's experience. For some people, it is an act of giving back to their parents to show their gratitude for their parent's sacrifice to care for them. Its positive perception of children can be seen in the study of "utang na loob" related to a familial obligation by Javier (7). The STS students' most mentioned and highest-ranked word associated with "utang na loob" is their parents, particularly mothers. Parents were the ones who they felt most indebted to because they were the ones who gave birth to them, took care of them, sacrificed a lot to provide the best for them, and provided all of their needs. Besides the enumerated actions, "utang na loob" refers to any good things done for another person without expecting anything in return. With this, "love" was the feeling most participants learned from "utang na loob." Because of the positive feelings brought by the "utang na loob," it becomes a good debt that should be paid or returned the same way.

With that, it is evident that with the good things done by the parents towards their children, their children feel the need to return the good things given to them by their parents. One of the acts of giving back was taking care of their parents the same way they'd been cared for

before. However, for some people who experience being taken advantage of by their family in the disguise of “utang na loob”, it is a child’s expected act of returning the care they received from their parents, as their parents get older. Because it is a children’s debt of gratitude “utang na loob” towards their parents who cared for them as a child (8). Failure to fulfill this duty equates to a disrespectful action towards parents. This proves that filial obligations are non-voluntary special obligations but must be fulfilled (9).

Factors Affecting Filial Obligation

According to Finley et al (5), there are four (4) factors affecting the filial obligations of an adult towards their elderly parents. These factors are role conflict, proximity, sibling availability, and socioeconomic status.

Role Conflict: Any inhibition to an individual’s performance or cause of any conflict in their roles at work, social, and family brought by their responsibilities to their elderly parents may lessen their feelings of filial obligations towards their elderly. In addition, this factor is also an essential predictor of filial obligations concerning gender, particularly to their female adult children.

Proximity: The distance the elderly parents have towards their adult children strongly affects their adult children’s filial obligation. The greater the distance is, the lesser the filial obligation or it can nullify the adult child’s sense of obligation. Moreover, for male adult children, distance is a significant variable concerning their sense of obligation towards their mother.

Sibling Availability: The sense of obligation for other siblings may be reduced or diminished, when one of their siblings is always available and ready to assist in caregiving for their parents.

Socioeconomic Status: In the study of Lee (1980), socioeconomic status has a significant role in filial obligations (20). Most individuals in the middle class have other alternative resources to assist their parents in coping with various issues or concerns regarding aging. According to Bahr (1976) (21), adult children who are financially and educationally advantaged can provide more alternative sources of care. In addition, SES is one of the

determinants in the allocation of caregiving responsibilities between siblings (8).

Parental Caregiving of Adult Child

Parental caregiving of adult children weighs so much burden (8). It is considered one of the stressful events in the adult child caregiver’s life that might lead to negative outcomes (11). Despite its burden, due to its deep roots in society’s culture and norms, the burden of caregiving was not equally distributed and shouldered by all siblings. In the study conducted by Albertini & Mantovani (8), Italians showed the highest turnout in supporting the equal sharing of responsibilities between children (sons and daughters). Meanwhile, Filipinos show a low score in supporting children’s sharing of duties in providing care for their elderly parents. The care provided by adult children to their parents can be affected by their parent-child relationship and their parent’s preferred sex of care provider.

Parent-Child Relationship and Care

To lessen the negative consequences due to the stress brought by parental caregiving to the adult childcare providers and to provide high-quality care for the elderly parent as a care receiver, the parent-child relationship serves a moderating role. Maintaining a high-quality parent-child relationship promotes a caring behavior towards adult children (primary caregiver) which drives them to act according to their willingness to help their parents and lessen the feeling of being obligated to care for the older parents. Aside from that, due to the promoted willingness, the adult child will be encouraged to create a long-term plan of care to be a better care provider for their parents (11).

Meanwhile, scholars who study parent-child relationships from a transactional perspective emphasize the communication and actions that define close relationships. In everyday life, this may imply that parents should express their love for their children and that children should respect and show affection for their parents (12). Following that, functional definitions also provide insight into various aspects of parent-child relationships. This perspective emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the responsibilities of the family members. For instance, the parent-child relationship can be

seen as a reciprocity of care depending on the current life stage (12).

Sex Preference of the Care Provider

Parent’s preference for their care provider also influences the care they receive from their adult children. In the study of Pashos & McBurney (13), the sex of the care provider affects the invested care. Female adult children or daughters compared to male adult children show a higher caregiving attitude (13). In the previous studies (22-24), daughters serve as traditional care providers to their birth parents in some Western countries, which supports Pashos & McBurney’s claim (6). Daughters are socially expected “natural” caregivers and are held responsible for their parents and emotional care. Aside from that, they are also considered kin-keepers and are more likely to be the primary caregivers of their older parents (8). In line with the given reasons from the previous sentence, daughters are the most suggested child of Filipino parents to take the responsibility of being their caregiver.

Unlike the Philippines, countries in East Asia, specifically China, have an extreme son preference. Due to their Confucian patriarchal tradition throughout the years, high expectations towards sons attributed to the boosted son parental preferred caregiver (14). Aside from this, most of the caregiving role received by the son is a less demanding job (financial help) and limited or non-time consuming than the daughters’ (8).

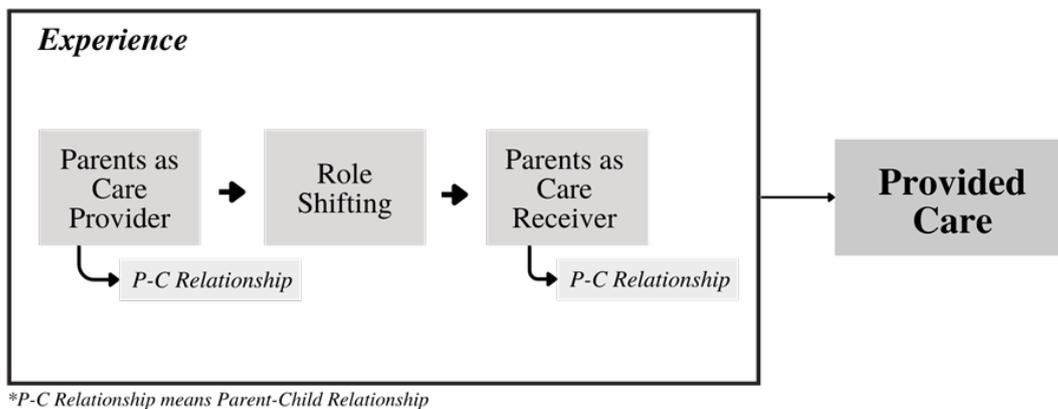
Research Objective

As shown in **Figure 1**, the researchers aim to understand the influence of the parent-child relationship and care on each other as the parents and children experience shifting in their roles as care providers and receivers. Moreover, this study aims to explore the Filipino culture of filial obligations by looking at the narratives of Filipino elderly parents as they receive care from their children. This will help aid in the lack of studies exploring the perspective of elderly parents as care receivers.

Another aim of this study is to identify the different factors that affect the decision of elderly parents in choosing their main care provider from their children. With these objectives, this study aims to contribute to the research body that will assist in developing appropriate community-based programs that can transform society by advocating the role of education in creating useful social change in people of all ages. To serve as the guide of researchers as they conduct this study, they ought to answer the following research questions:

1. How does their parent-child relationship influence the care their child provides for their parents?
2. How do elderly parents as care receivers view their child as a care provider?
3. What factors do elderly parents have when choosing their care providers?

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



METHODS

Qualitative Design and Methodology

This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design (15) which aims to understand the lived experiences of elderly parents, particularly in their parent-child relationship development as their role shifts to being a care receiver from being a care provider. The elderly parents were the storytellers of their own lives. The narratives shared by the elderly parents were arranged according to their sequence—beginning, middle, and end, and organized according to their consequences by the researchers. Overall, the narrative design focuses on the elderly parents' meaning as they experience role shifting as they age and how they make sense of it in their relationship as parent and child.

Research Site

Elderly parents were one of the vulnerable populations during this pandemic, and most of the people in this generation are not that highly technology literate. To collect the data for this study, the researchers conducted their recruitment process through their neighborhood and conducted a physical one-on-one interview with all of the respondents and their care providers adult children who gave them their permission. Meanwhile, a few participants conducted the interview online with the guidance of their care providers beside them.

Participants

The elderly participants for this study were chosen through snowball sampling (16). Due to the technological limitation of most of them, and their vulnerability to contracting COVID-19, the recruitment process was done through referral to the neighborhood of the researchers. Participants of this study have the following criteria set for the study: a) Participants are elderly parents who are taken care of by their adult child/ren; b) Participants are 60 years old or above; c) Participants are living in the same household with their adult child/ren who is serving as their primary caregiver; and d) Participants and their adult child care providers are willing to participate in the study. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria for persons who are not eligible to participate in the study are as follows: a) Elderly parents who are living

away from their children, and b) Older parents who do not receive direct care from their child/ren.

A total of five elderly parents were interviewed individually (Table 1). There were four female participants and one male participant. Two of the participants are 89 years old, two are 78 years old, and one participant is 74 years old. Codenames were used to protect the identity of the participants. Participants also stated how long their children had been caring for them. Gin has been cared for by his 2nd child for 4 years, Rosa has been cared for by her 2nd child for around 10 years, Jenny has been cared for by her 6th child for 18 years, Lisa has been cared for by her 9th child for 5 years, and Josie has been cared for by her 9th child 3 years. All of their care providers were their female children.

Data Collection

At the start of the data-gathering procedure, the researcher utilized social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram for the recruitment process of the participants. Aside from that, they also asked for referrals within their neighborhood and through their friends and acquaintances. Furthermore, this study employed a qualitative narrative design. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was conducted, where 11 open-ended questions were asked for the participants to answer. The interview questions were written in English and Filipino language. Interview questions revolve around asking the participants to describe their relationship as well as their thoughts about receiving care from their own children.

Some of the questions from the interview guide include: “Pwede niyo po bang ilarawan kung anong relasyon meron kayo ng inyong anak ngayon na siya/sila na ang nag-aalaga sa’yo ngayon? (Can you please describe what kind of relationship you have with your child now that they are the ones who take care of you?)” and “Ano po ang iyong pananaw o nararamdaman na ang iyong anak ang nag-aalaga sa inyo? (What is your attitude or feeling about having your child as your main caregiver?)”.

The data were collected through a semi-structured one-on-one interview wherein most were conducted face-to-face in their homes and few were online through Google Meet with the

Table 1: Demographics of the participants

Pseudonyms	Gin	Rosa	Jenny	Lisa	Josie
Sex at Birth	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	74	78	78	89	89
No. of Years Being Taken Care of	4 years	10 years	18 years	5 years	3 years
Sex of the Care Provider	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Birth Order of the Care Provider	2nd child out of 4 children	2nd child out of 4 children	6th child out of 7 children	9th child out of 11 children	9th child out of 9 children

assistance of their children to navigate the video conferencing application. The interviews typically last from 30 minutes to an hour, depending on the responses of the participants.

Before officially starting the interview process, researchers followed the sanitation guidelines to ensure the participants' safety. Aside from that, the informed consent was read aloud to the participants and their caregivers, then asked the participants to sign the informed consent if they voluntarily accept our invitation to participate. To show the researchers' gratitude, a token of appreciation was given to the participants in the form of a meal courtesy.

Data Analysis

After data collection, the collected qualitative data were placed in a Google Drive folder that is only accessible to the researchers. This qualitative data was then transcribed, then analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative research to identify, evaluate, analyze, and report emerging themes from the data gathered (17).

Braun and Clarke's (17) theme analysis was utilized in this study. The study followed the six phases of theme analysis (17). The initial phase is familiarization with the data set. In this phase, the researchers read through the whole data set and allowed themselves to become immersed in the data to discover potential ideas and patterns from the data. The second

phase is generating initial codes. These codes are referred to as the most basic elements of the raw data that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (17). The data were first manually coded using Microsoft Excel, which was followed by conducting a line-by-line coding that helps the researcher determine the important information between the sentences in the interview needed for the study. The third phase is searching for themes. After gathering an extensive collection of codes from the raw data, the researchers combined these codes to produce appropriate possible themes. The following phase is to review the themes. Since candidate themes are already there, the researchers needed to refine and verify the themes. Sometimes some topics may not be themes at all, may be combined with others, or may be divided into independent themes. These guarantee that at the conclusion of this phase, the researchers have a thorough understanding of each of the themes and how each data set makes sense. After this phase, the researcher then defined and named the themes. At this point, the researchers generated clear definitions and names for each theme. Lastly, the researchers produced the fully-worked out themes which allowed them to produce the writing of the report (Table 2).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher plays an important role in a research study. In qualitative research, the researchers must be able to understand the experiences and feelings of the participants.

Table 2: Sample coding process

Description of parent-child relationship as care provider [Before]	Initial Codes	Interpretation	Emerging Themes
<p>Gin, 74: (his daughter speaking) <i>Dati ***** siya yung nag-aalaga ng anak ko eh. Di niya iniitwan yung anak ko pag may hinahatid anak. May maliit pa ako dati. Kapag naghahatid ako ng iba kong anak, siya ang nagbabantay</i>" [Before, he usually takes care of his grandchildren. He doesn't leave my child. I have a little one before, when I need to take my other children to school, he is the one who takes care of her].</p> <p>Gin, 74: <i>"Inaalagaan na pare-parehas lang yan"</i> [They were taken care of the same].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elderly parent as the care provider also provides care to his grandchildren. - Have a close parent-child relationship - Elderly parents takes care of all of his children 	<p>Before when the elderly parents were the care provider, they provided equal care to all of their children and also to their grandchildren. Because of this they develop a close parent-child relationship where the elderly parents are still the care provider and their children are the care receiver.</p>	<p>Close Parent-Child Relationship</p>
<p>Rosa, 78: <i>"Lumaki yan sa puder ko kaya malapit talaga kami"</i> [She grew up under my care that's why we're really close to each other].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current provider grew up under the care receiver's care before, that's why they have a close relationship. 	<p>Living in the same household, the elderly parent as a care provider and their children as a care receiver have a close relationship. In spite of this, the elderly parent is more open to sharing her problems with her son, who is her 3rd child.</p>	<p>Close Parent-Child Relationship</p>

Thus, the researcher must build personal engagement while maintaining impartiality and empathy for the participants. In addition, researchers are expected to keep findings in context and must avoid making judgments (18). Therefore, member checking was also done during data analysis to verify the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation and ensure the participants' experiences were accurately represented.

The researcher in narrative research is both an interactant with a strategic stake in the unfolding interview and an analyzer of the gathered interview material (19).

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical procedures to address possible concerns that might develop when an individual is involved in a study. In this study, participants were asked to sign a consent form that included all of the details of the study. This section explains what the study

is all about and what their participation entails. The informed consent also notified the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any moment without stating any reason and without facing any consequences. When the participants had signed the consent form, the interview was then conducted.

Furthermore, when doing a research study, confidentiality is an important factor to consider. All the personal information obtained from the participants were kept confidential. The researchers' used codenames to protect the identity of the participants. Additionally, their personal information should never be associated with the findings of the study. All acquired data were placed in a folder file accessible only to the researcher and were treated with care to preserve the data from the participants that they have consented to disclose in the study.

RESULTS

In presenting the results of this study, the researchers discuss the emerging themes generated from the thematic analysis conducted for each research question. The presentation of the generated themes started by describing the parent-child relationship's influence on the care received by the parents from their adult child. The themes start by describing their parent-child relationship when the parents are the care provider, when the parents begin transitioning to care receivers until the parents become care receivers, and the influence of the parent-child in the adult child's provided care to their parents. Another set of themes presented in this study is the presentation of the views of elderly parents to their adult children as care providers. Lastly, the findings of this study also identify the different factors elderly parents have considered in choosing their main adult child provider.

Emerging Themes

Research Question #1: How does their parent-child relationship influence the care their child provides for their parents?

Influence of the Parent-Child Relationship to the Received Care of Parents

Parent-Child Relationship: Parents as Care Provider

When the elderly parents were still the care providers of their children, most of them described their parent-child relationship to be close, while one elderly parent described their relationship to be distant.

Close Parent-Child Relationship

Most participants recalled when they were still the care providers of their children, they had a close parent-child relationship, particularly with the child who took the role of their parent's care provider. For the participants, their close parent-child relationship is due to the equal care they provided to each of their children and grandchildren as a care provider, and because they live together in the same household.

"Inaalagaan na pare-parehas lang yan" (They were taken care of the same).

(Gin, 74)

"Lumaki yan sa puder ko kaya malapit talaga kami" (She grew up under my care that's why we're really close to each other).

(Rosa, 78)

The closeness of their relationship is shown through being open to sharing their problems as a parent and child with each other.

"Ang inaanuhan ko talaga ng problema.. Nilalabasan yung anak kong lalaki" (I really share my problems with my son).

(Rosa, 78)

Distant Parent-Child Relationship

Meanwhile, one of the participants stated that she has a distant parent-child relationship with her children even with her child that currently takes care of her. This is because of insufficient family interaction with her since she has a job and their father is the one who is left at home to take care of the children.

"Noon, hindi ako ang nag-aalaga kundi tatay nila " (Before, I'm not the one who takes care of them but their father).

(Jenny, 78)

Parent-Child Relationship: Parents as Care Receiver

As elderly parents transition from being their child's care provider to their child's care receiver, some elderly parents experience changes in their parent-child relationship. For the parents and child that already have a close relationship, their relationship becomes closer and some maintain their close parent-child relationship. Meanwhile, for elderly parents that has a distant relationship with their children before describe that their relationship became close as the elderly parents transition to being a care receiver.

Brings Parent-Child Relationship Closer

Two out of five participants who have a close parent-child relationship with their children as a care provider experience an uplift in their already close parent-child relationship years after they transition to the role of the care receiver.

"Mas naging malapit kami, sweet kami. Kaunting ano lang (Painumin mo gamot si tatay)- tawag sa cellphone. Kahit mga alas onse yan, alas dose" [We became closer with each other, sweet to each other. If there's some minimal concern (Let dad drink his medicine), they will immediately call each other. Regardless if it's 11 pm or 12 midnight).

(Rosa, 78)

Parent-Child Relationship Becomes Close

One out of the five participants that have a distant parent-child relationship with their children when she's still a care provider experiences a gradual positive change to their parent-child relationship years upon transitioning into a care receiver. Because of the interaction brought by taking care of her children, they became closer to each other unlike before.

"Minsan di ko maasikaso noong nag-aaral pa sila kaya tatay nila ang nag-alaga. Ngayon nagkalapit na kami dahil siya na ang nag-alaga sa akin." (Sometimes I can't attend to them when they are still studying that's why their father was the one who takes care of them. Now, we became close because she is the one who takes care of me).

(Jenny, 78)

No Changes in the Parent-Child Relationship

The status of the parent-child relationship of two out of five participants when they are still a care provider even after transitioning to a care receiver remains the same. Their parent-child relationship remains the same despite the changes in the participant's role.

"Parehas" (Same).

(Josie, 89)

"Parehas daw... Mutual relationship" (Just the same... Mutual relationship).

(Lisa, 89)

Parent-Child Relationships Influence in the Provided Care

With the mentioned changes in the parent-child relationship of the elderly parents with their children as they transition from being care providers to care receivers. The elderly parents mentioned different influences of the parent-child relationship to the care they are receiving.

Other Family Members Also Provides Care

Because of the positive development in the parent-child relationship, it influences other family members such as grandchildren to also care for the elderly parent, not just the main adult child care provider. One out of five participants experience being cared for by his grandchildren.

"Yung mga apo ko rin lagi akong pinapaalalahanan, tinatanong kung kumain na" (My grandchildren always reminds me, they always ask if I already eat).

(Gin, 74)

Care Providers Make Huge Sacrifices

One out of five participants also saw the huge sacrifices her child who took up the role of being her care provider did just to provide her the best care. The participant stated that her care provided sacrificed her work abroad and came back to the Philippines when she asked her to go home and take care of them.

"Parang malaking ngayon..Kasi dalawa kaming inaalagaan. Pero ako talaga una niyang inalagaan, yung pag opera ko sa mata. 3 months di ako makagalaw. Paliguan..lahat lahat, pag inom ng gamot. Sakripisyo siya, pinauwi ko lang talaga yan sya, trabaho sa abroad [Dubai], pinauwi ko talaga siya" (I think it's huge now.. Because she takes care of both of us. But I am the one she first cared of after having an operation in my eye. I wasn't able to move for 3 months. Bathing me... All of it, drinking my medicine. She sacrifice, I asked her to come back here. She's working abroad (Dubai), I asked her to go home).

(Rosa, 78)

Enhancement of the Provided Care

Another influence of the parent-child relationship development is the advancement and enhancement of the care being provided. From the five participants, one of them shared that with the development of the relationship between a parent and child and the current technological advancement, care providers can do various things and adopt new ideas that can be added to the care they are providing to their parents as care receivers.

"Malaki kasi ano kumbaga, sa panahon natin ngayon mas marami na tayong naadapt na ideas,

or mas nanu nurture tayo, mas nauunawaan yung pagmamahal ngayon kesa noon. Kasi yung pag-aalaga noon very typical (okay that is fine..??) pero ngayon marami ng pwedeng gawin na napapanood natin sa social media, ano pwedeng idagdag sa pag-cecare, sa pagmamahal” (It is huge, because in our current time we adapt a lot of ideas or we are more nurtured, we got a deeper understanding of love now than before. The care before is so typical (okay that is fine..??) but now we can do a lot of things that we see on social media, this can be included in caring, in love).

(Lisa, 89)

Research Question #2: How do elderly parents as care receivers view their child as a care provider?

Caring for Elderly Parents is their Children’s Obligation

In Filipino culture, it is known that when parents get older, the children will be the ones who will take responsibility for their parents. All of the participants agreed that it is their children's obligation to care for their parents as they grow older. This demonstrates that the filial obligation in the Philippines is believed to become culturally genuine.

“Parang hindi naman.. Ay obligasyon naman yata niya. Syempre sino ba iba mag-alaga, ibang tao ba. Sino namang mag-aalaga sa amin. Syempre obligasyon nila. Wala naman akong ibang.. Alangan manawag ka sa kapitbahay” (It doesn't seem like it.. I guess it's really her obligation. Of course, who else will take care of me, other people? Who will take care of us? Of course, it is their obligation. I don't have anything else).

(Rosa, 78)

“Obligasyon daw talaga sa a family..” (It is really the family’s obligation).

(Jenny, 78)

“Dapat lang na alagaan ng anak ang magulang lalo kung matanda na” (Children should take care of their parents especially if they are old).

(Jenny, 78)

“Obligasyon daw talaga sa a family..” (It is really the obligation of the family).

(Lisa, 89)

“Eh talaga namang aki (anak) mag-aalaga sa gurang” (It's really the children who takes care of the parent).

(Josie, 89)

In addition to these ideas, the parents expressed their realizations and perspectives about their child as their care provider.

Happiness

Three out of five participants also shared that the idea of having their children as their care provider makes them feel happy as it makes them feel valuable.

“Syempre mas ano sa pakiramdam..Masaya ka” (Of course it feels better. You are happy).

(Gin, 74)

“Syempre masaya ako, kasi wala namang ibang mag-aalaga sa akin. Siya (ate grace) ang nakakaunawa sa akin, sa isa't-isa” (Of course I am happy, because there is no one else to take care of me. She (ate Grace) is the one who understands me, each other).

(Jenny, 78)

“Ang pakiramdam ko masaya. Parang ano man giraray, naramdaman ko na meron akong anak, na dae ko pa man..” (“I feel happy. It's like no matter what happens, I felt that I had a child, that I still had..”).

(Lisa, 89)

“Masaya daw siya dahil nasa piling siya namin” ((child) She feels happy because she lives with us).

(Lisa, 89)

Mutual Relationship

One participant stated that the caring obligation is a mutual relationship. The obligation to provide care is mutual since parents take care of their children when they are born, and the children will take care of their parents when they get older.

“Mutual relationship yung obligation” (The obligation is a mutual relationship).

(Lisa, 89)

Respect

One participant also stated that caring for an elderly parent indicates respect for the elderly.

"Ayon tatao magrespeto sa gurang. Meron di tatao (hindi marunong) magrespeto, baliwala sana" (They know how to respect the elderly. Because there are other children who do not know how to give their respect).

(Josie, 89)

Research Question #3: What factors do elderly parents have when choosing their care providers?

Deciding Factors in Choosing Elderly Parents' Care Provider Role

In deciding for the adult child that will be the elderly parent's provider, participants mentioned different factors that help them and their children to decide on who'll be caring for them.

Elderly Parents' Personal Decision

Most of the participants mentioned how they came up with the child they presently have as their caregiver. Two out of five of the participants stated that it is their own decision who will take care of them.

"Ako, ako talaga" (Me, it's really me).

(Rosa, 78)

"Ako ang pumili dahil walang ibang mag-aalaga.." (I'm the one who really decided since there is no one else who can take the caring responsibility).

(Jenny, 78)

Although they decide who would take care of them, there are some reasons why this did not occur. While they are happy with their current child who takes care of them, they mentioned that they still prefer a particular child to take care of them if possible. Several factors influenced their decision on who will take care of them.

Proximity

A participant identified proximity as a factor in his decision. The closeness of their houses to each other is referred to as proximity. It was

stated that living close to him was a factor in her selection as her care provider.

"Kasi magkatabi lang yung bahay, kwarto.. Magkasama sa bahay, magkatabi lang yung kwarto" (Because the house and bedroom are next to each other.. Together in the house, the bedroom is next to each other).

(Gin, 74)

Availability

Another factor highlighted by participants is the availability of their children. This factor influences their decision as some of their children may be unable to take on the caring obligation due to their availability because of work, personal life, and other reasons.

"Wala, siya lang talaga. Mga busy sila". (None, she is the only one available. They (other children) are all busy).

(Rosa, 78)

"Wala naman..Meron kaso may trabaho.. Si Joey (panganay)". (None... Oh yes there is but he has work, his name is Joey (eldest)).

(Jenny, 78)

"Oo ta, dae magtrabaho, kung walang trabaho edi siya mag-aalaga sako (sakin)". (Yes, if he doesn't have work then he'll take care of me).

(Josie, 89)

Circumstances

Personal circumstances were also taken into consideration in their decision. One (1) participant stated that she had an eye condition and insisted on her child taking care of her.

"Nag-abroad yan, pinapauwi ko dahil dito sa mata ko". (She went abroad for work, but I insisted her to come home because of my eye condition).

(Rosa, 78)

Sex Identity

When asked who would take care of them considering the sex identity, two participants answered that they prefer someone of the same sex as them to take care of them since some of their daily activities might make them feel shy when done with the opposite sex.

"Siya lang ang babae.. Siya ang maalaga kahit magkagalit" *"Syempre babae, kasi syempre nahihiya"*

rin tulad ng pagpunta ng banyo..". (She is the only female, she is caring even though we have misunderstandings... I really prefer my female child because of course I get shy especially when I need to go to the bathroom).

(Jenny, 78)

"Anak kong babae..Walang kataan (bicol language) (hindi maiilang dahil parehas babae)". (I prefer my female child... No awkwardness).

(Lisa, 89)

Children's Decision

Some participants stated that it's their children's decision who will take care of them. They added that when their children made the decision, it was based on their willingness to take care of them.

"Gusto rin nila [refer to his children]". (My children really wanted to take care of me).

(Gin, 74)

"(Her child) Gusto ko rin siyang alagaan". ((Her child speaking) I also wanted to take care of her).

(Lisa, 89)

Parent and Child's Decision

One participant also answered that both of them (parent-child) had an agreement on the caring obligations based on their willingness and own decision.

Parehas kita..(child) Gusto niya dito sa akin, at gusto ko rin siyang alagaan". (We both decided. (her child speaking) She wants her to be with me. And I also want to take care of her).

(Lisa, 89)

DISCUSSION

Caring responsibility within the members of the family is a multifaceted responsibility that must be fulfilled. Particularly, taking care of elderly parents is a significant obligation for their adult children as their parents' need greater support and assistance as they age. In this study, the elderly parents shared their thoughts and sentiments on the exploration of the concept of filial obligation as it relates to their parent-child relationship.

Taking care of elderly parents comes with numerous challenges to the child, and is considered one of the stressful events in the

adult child caregiver's life (11). Literature suggests that the parent-child relationship should serve as a moderating role to lessen the negative consequences of the adult child care providers and to provide high-quality care for the elderly parent as a care receiver (11). This addresses the study's first research question: "How does their parent-child relationship influence the care their child provides for their parents?"

The participants in this study were asked to describe their relationships with their children. Most of them reported having close relationships, especially with the child who has taken on the responsibility of caring for them. For example, one participant shared:

"Lumaki yan sa puder ko kaya malapit talaga kami" (She grew up under my care that's why we're really close to each other).

(Rosa, 78)

Additionally, the participants revealed that they have deep ties with one another, which allows them to communicate about their problems with one another. However, one participant noted a different experience. She reported that her husband, who is the father of their children, was the one who looked after their children while they were little. She considers that she had a distant parent-child relationship with her children, including the one who is currently caring for her. She shared:

"Noon, hindi ako ang nag-aalaga kundi tatay nila " (Before, I'm not the one who takes care of them but their father).

(Jenny, 78)

The findings suggest that the majority of participants had a good interpersonal foundation in their caring responsibility relationship, despite one participant's different experience. Notably, the latter participant reported that no unfavorable circumstance affected their caring responsibility connection.

The researchers also investigated the development of the parent-child relationship through time. When asked how their relationship has changed, their responses varied. Two out of every five individuals who have a close parent-child relationship with their children as a care provider report an improvement in their existing close parent-child relationship years after switching to the

role of care recipient. A participant who has a distant relationship with their children indicated that the caring relationship gives them the opportunity to become closer. Finally, there were two individuals who did not report any changes in their parent-child relationship.

The common duties of parents in the family is to provide care for their children. However, as they get older, parents' responsibilities vary, bringing with them a slew of new changes and experiences. From providing care to receiving care from their children. To better understand the perspective the elderly parent as a care receiver, the participants were asked on what types of care they need in their point of age, 4 out of 5 participants answered that they need basic care such as bathing and eating, as well as conducting household tasks to maintain their cleanliness which they also expressed their happiness at being able to meet their caregiving needs. In addition, one participant stated that, in addition to basic care, elderly parents require emotional support such as love and understanding.

"Ahh sa ano, sa pagkain..Yung pag-unawa, saka pagmamahal" (Uhm, assisting me to eat..Also the understanding and love).

(Lisa, 89)

Another elderly parent's perspective highlighted that being elderly does not need them to entirely care for their adult child, emphasizing the concept of lessened responsibility. However, other participants viewed the care they received from their children as a reflection of the care they once provided. Two out of five participants mentioned that the care they now receive mirrors the care they gave their children when they were the caregivers. They described their relationships during their children's younger years, noting that they attended to their children's personal hygiene and other needs. The participants' responses indicated a strong connection between their past caregiving roles and the care they currently receive from their children.

Despite evidence suggesting that caring for elderly parents is one of the most stressful events in an adult child's life, often leading to various negative outcomes (8,11), this study's findings did not support this notion as participants reported no challenges in their caregiving relationships. This can be attributed

to the close parent-child relationships most participants described. A strong, positive relationship likely fostered a sense of willingness and commitment in the caregivers, encouraging them to provide better care for their parents (11).

After exploring the development of their parent-child relationship, the researchers sought to comprehend its influence on providing care. The data acquired demonstrated a beneficial growth in their relationship that extends not only to the parents' children but also to other family members such as grandchildren, as one out of five participants has also been cared for by his grandchildren. Another influence of their relationship's growth demonstrated that the adult children who took on the position of care provider might make significant sacrifices. As an instance, one participant asked her child to return home from working overseas in order to care for her, which her child did effectively.

"Parang malaking ngayon..Kasi dalawa kaming inaalagaan. Pero ako talaga una niyang inalagaan, yung pag opera ko sa mata. 3 months di ako makagalaw. Paliguan..lahat lahat, pag inom ng gamot. Sakripisyo siya, pinauwi ko lang talaga yan sya, trabaho sa abroad [Dubai], pinauwi ko talaga siya" (I think it's huge now.. Because she takes care of both of us. But I am the one she first cared of after having an operation in my eye. I wasn't able to move for 3 months. Bathing me... All of it, drinking my medicine. She sacrifice, I asked her to come back here. She's working abroad (Dubai), I asked her to go home).

(Rosa, 78)

Finally, a participant's child also stated that their relationship enhanced the care provided. She stated that current technological advancements have assisted them in adopting new concepts for providing higher-quality treatment.

Having established how the parent-child relationship was formed and enhanced in the first research question, the second research question addresses the perspectives of elderly parents on their children as care providers where the question is: "How do elderly parents as care receivers view their children as care providers?". This question aims to delve into the concept of filial obligation. Filial obligation refers to the daily personal assistance provided by family members to meet the needs of their

parents, which is crucial for ensuring parental well-being and health (6). Moreover, filial obligations are seen as a product of a person's social and structural environment (5). In the context of Filipino culture, filial obligation can be referred to as "utang na loob," a deeply ingrained concept among most Filipino parents. Additionally, Filipinos believe that each family member has a variety of responsibilities that must be fulfilled to show respect to the family and create harmonious relationships (4).

When participants were asked about their opinion on filial obligation, the parents expressed their realizations and perspectives about their child as their care provider. Their responses emphasize happiness, mutual relationship, and respect. Some of the participants shared:

"Syempre masaya ako, kasi wala namang ibang mag-aalaga sa akin. Siya (ate grace) ang nakakaunawa sa akin, sa isa't-isa" (Of course I am happy, because there is no one else to take care of me. She (ate Grace) is the one who understands me, each other).

(Jenny, 78)

"Mutual relationship yung obligation" (The obligation is a mutual relationship).

(Lisa, 89)

"Ayon tatao magrespeto sa gurang. Meron di tatao [hindi marunong] magrespeto, baliwala sana" (They know how to respect the elderly. Because there are other children who do not know how to give their respect).

(Josie, 89)

Participants are happy with the idea of having their children provide care for them because it makes them feel valuable. Participants also agreed that filial obligation is a mutual relationship since parents care for their children when they are born, and their children would care for their parents when they are older. Finally, one participant stated that caring for an aged parent shows respect for the elderly, which supports the literature that contains the concept of respect. When asked if it is truly their child's obligation to care for them as they grow older, all of the participants answered that it is really their responsibility. This supports the Filipino idea of filial obligation, which is thought to be culturally

legitimate. Some of their responses are as follows:

"Parang hindi naman.. Ay obligasyon naman yata niya. Syempre sino ba iba mag-alaga, ibang tao ba. Sino namang mag-aalaga sa amin. Syempre obligasyon nila. Wala naman akong ibang.. Alangan manawag ka sa kapitbahay" (It doesn't seem like it.. I guess it's really her obligation. Of course, who else will take care of me, other people? Who will take care of us? Of course, it is their obligation. I don't have anything else).

(Rosa, 78)

"Obligasyon daw talaga sa a family.." (It is really the family's obligation)

(Jenny, 78)

"Dapat lang na alagaan ng anak ang magulang lalo kung matanda na" (Children should take care of their parents especially if they are old).

(Jenny, 78)

Having an understanding of how parent-child relationships influence the care provided by their children and their perceptions of filial obligation, the final research question aims to identify the various factors that influence participants in choosing their main care provider from among their children wherein the question is: "What factors do elderly parents consider when choosing their care providers?".

When asked who chose to take care of them, the majority of the participants explained how they came up with the child who is now their caretaker. Two out of every five individuals answered that they personally chose who will care for them. Furthermore, while they are satisfied with their present child who cares for them, when asked if they have a specific adult child to care for them, they all provided names of their other child who turns out to be different from who is currently taking care of them.

According to a study by Finley et al (5), there are four factors affecting an adult child's filial obligations to their elderly parents. These factors include (1) role conflict, (2) proximity, (3) sibling availability, and (4) socioeconomic status. According to the data acquired, answers from the participants highlighted factors that are in accordance with the research, such as proximity, role conflict, and sibling availability. Proximity refers to the distance the elderly parents have towards their adult children, which strongly affects their adult children's

filial obligation. The greater the distance is, the lesser the filial obligation or it can nullify the adult child's sense of obligation (5). A participant identified proximity as a factor in his decision. The participant stated that living close to him was a factor in her selection as her care provider and heightened the sense of filial obligation of his adult child.

"Kasi magkatabi lang yung bahay, kwarto.. Magkasama sa bahay, magkatabi lang yung kwarto" (Because the house and bedroom are next to each other.. Together in the house, the bedroom is next to each other).

(Gin, 74)

The role conflict factor was also mentioned by the participants. Any challenge to an individual's performance or source of conflict in their duties at work, social, and family caused by their responsibilities to their elderly parents may reduce their emotions of filial obligation to their elderly parents. However, despite the study's claim that it may reduce their feelings of filial obligation, one participant stated that she had an eye condition and insisted on her child, who is working abroad, leaving her work to care for her, and that her child is happy to do so, implying that role conflict did not apply in their situation because it does not reduce her sense of responsibility even if her personal life struggles.

Another factor highlighted by participants is the availability of their children. This factor influences their decision as some of their children may be unable to take on the caring obligation due to their availability because of work, personal life, and other reasons.

"Wala, siya lang talaga. Mga busy sila". (None, she is the only one available. They (other children) are all busy).

(Rosa, 78)

The sex identity of their care provider is a factor that was noted by the participants but was not covered in the Finley research (5). In the study of Pashos & McBurney (13), the sex of the care provider has an effect on the invested care. Female adult children or daughters in comparison to male adult children show a higher caregiving attitude (13). Daughters are socially expected "natural" caregivers and are held responsible for their parents and emotional care. Aside from that, they are also considered as kin-keepers and were more likely

to be the primary caregiver of their older parents (8). The majority of participants stated that they desire their children with the same sex identity as them to care for them. They pointed out that several of their normal tasks may make them feel awkward when performed with the other sex. Some participants, on the other hand, said that it is up to their children to decide who will care for them. They stated that their willingness compelled them to take on the caring responsibilities. According to one research, because of the increased willingness, the adult child will be encouraged to develop a long-term care plan in order to be a better caregiver for their parents (11). Finally, one participant claimed that both of them (parent and child) had an agreement to take care of each other.

CONCLUSIONS

Care is an essential part of human existence that aims to show compassion, empathy, and attentiveness toward other people to achieve their wellness (1). At the early stages of life of a parent, caring for their children is one of their significant responsibilities. As they age and their children grow, parents experience changes in their role as their children become their care providers, and caring for them becomes their adult child's responsibility. In the Philippines, the responsibility of taking care of their parents is double its original weight as Filipinos have a cultural norm of "utang na loob" or debt of gratitude towards parents that should be given back in return through caring for them. In the present study, the researchers explored the experiences of elderly parents regarding the development of their parent-child relationship and the care provided as they undergo major changes in their life roles. According to the results, there was an improvement in the parent-child relationship when the elderly parents were still a care provider of their children until they transitioned to being a care receiver. The development of their relationship is attributed to the increased bonding and social interaction between the parents (care receiver) and adult child (care provider) after the transition in the role of the parents. In addition, the data also shows that the type of care given by the caregivers varies to the kind of parent-child relationship. A high-quality parent-child relationship improves the caring behavior of the adult child as a care provider resulting in providing care that could address all the needs

of their elderly parents. This result agrees with the study of Lin et al. (11) highlights the influence of a high-quality parent-child relationship on the willingness of the adult child carer to provide the best care plan for their parents.

In addition, elderly parents' preferred caregivers were also explored in this study. As elderly parents transition into being care receivers, they have their preferred children that they want to shoulder the responsibility of being their care provider. In this study, all of the interviewed elderly parents have their daughter as their primary caregiver. Aside from that, their daughter regardless of the elderly parents' sex prefers their daughter to take care of them over their son. Their preference for their daughter is supported by Pashos and McBurney's (13) study which shows that daughters or female adult children show a higher caregiving attitude than sons. Aside from that, daughters are also the socially expected primary caregivers that are responsible for their parents' emotional care (8).

Besides the elderly parents' preferred sex of their caregiver, they also consider some factors in choosing their primary caregiver. The factors that emerged from the collated data were proximity, availability, and circumstances. Most of the factors that emerged were similar to Finley et al (5) explored factors affecting filial obligation. In relation to choosing their primary caregivers, most of the participants stated that they are the one that decides who will take care of them.

The idea of mirrored care also emerged from the collected narratives of the elderly parents which are not evident in other literature and studies mentioned in the study. Mirrored care refers to the term used by the participants in which the care they provided to their children before as care providers are being provided again in the same way they did by their children to them as care receivers.

Implications to Research

Because of the limited to no available data, literature, and study regarding the experiences of elderly parents as care receivers and the major transitions in life they are undergoing, this study contributes to the research by providing general information regarding the elderly parents' experience being a care

receiver. Moreover, it further opens new opportunities for concepts that can be further discussed, explored, and can be given in a new light. However, due to the limited sample of this study, the result cannot be generalized as it only represents a small population.

Implications to Clinical Psychology

The findings of this study about the significant influence of parent-child relationships on the quality of care received by elderly parents from their adult children as care providers can help psychologists and counselors develop various frameworks and programs that can help families provide the best care they can give to their elderly parents. Aside from that, the findings of this study provide additional knowledge that can contribute to creating counselling techniques that can help both elderly parents and adult children as they transition to their new roles, and further understand Filipino caregiving behaviors concerning the Filipino culture of filial obligations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and publication.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MJB: Drafted the manuscript and contributes to the concept development and design of the article through data collection, analysis and data interpretation for the article. Revised the manuscript critically with intellectual contents and approved the final version of the manuscript.

AJB: Drafted the manuscript and contributes to the concept development and design of the article through data collection, analysis and data interpretation for the article. Revised the manuscript critically with intellectual contents and approved the final version of the manuscript.

TR: Guided the other authors in the concept development and design of the article and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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