

Reversing Traditional Gender Roles: Narratives of Househusbands With Working Wives

Kyle Russelle P. Paredes*, Anajane Marie L. Silvestre, Teresa V. Buna
Cavite State University – Imus, Imus, Cavite, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: kylerrusselle.paredes@cvsu.edu.ph

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Abstract. This study explored the narratives of five househusbands from Cavite, Philippines, focusing on their preparations for the role and experiences in financial management, childrearing, household management, interpersonal relationships, and time management. Participants were selected based on specific criteria: having children, being full-time househusbands for more than two months, having working wives, and living in a nuclear family setup. Initially, these men were breadwinners with minimal involvement in household chores. However, financial difficulties, such as low income, unstable earnings, and job loss, led them to transition into full-time caregiving roles. As they adapted, they demonstrated resilience, dedication, and care for their families, learning to manage daily responsibilities efficiently. They developed personalized time management strategies, acquired new household skills, and overcame challenges disciplining their children while expressing love differently. Over time, their competence in household and caregiving tasks improved, creating a sense of fulfillment and happiness in their roles. Reflecting on their experiences, participants concluded that being a househusband does not diminish one's masculinity. Instead, their journey highlights the importance of redefining traditional gender roles, breaking societal stereotypes, and embracing diverse family dynamics in a changing social landscape.

Keywords: Family dynamics; Gender roles; Househusbands; Gender; Narratives.

1.0 Introduction

The Filipino expression "*haligi ng tahanan*" (pillar of the household) reflects the traditional expectations for gender roles and behavior inside the family unit, where the father is regarded as the central defender, provider, and leader. The father is responsible for providing for the family's financial needs and ensuring their essential needs are satisfied. Making significant judgments and being responsible for household matters are frequent responsibilities of this role. The Filipino term "*ilaw ng tahanan*" (light of the household) is a cultural idea emphasizing the mother figure's crucial function and importance within the family and domestic setting. The expression captures the idea that mothers are viewed as the emotional, guiding, and caring force that offers coziness, love, and stability to the home. Mothers are frequently seen as the major caregivers in charge of raising their children, running the home, and supporting their family members emotionally. Customarily, the father serves as the family's primary provider and titular leader in the Philippines' patriarchal society (Guinto, 2019). The cultural norms and ideas passed down through Filipino society's generations are the origins of these traditional gender roles and indicators.

The concept of stay-at-home parents has often been associated with mothers. However, there has been a significant rise in the number of men choosing to stay at home and take on the traditional tasks typically performed by women, challenging the notion that caregiving is solely a female domain. There is now a significant societal shift in attitudes toward gender roles and parenting taking place, as more men are staying at home and tending to childcare (Wang, et al., 2013). In today's society, a man who takes on the primary responsibility for running the home and looking after the family's domestic duties, with his partner or spouse handling the primary responsibility for working outside the home, is called a “househusband”.

This emerging dynamic, however, is not without tension. Househusbands often face social scrutiny and internal conflict due to persistent cultural expectations that define masculinity through economic provision and leadership. Despite progressive strides in gender equality, societal acceptance of men as primary caregivers remains limited and influenced by longstanding stereotypes. Crucially, economic and educational factors deeply influence the transition to a househusband role. For many men, lower educational attainment and limited employment opportunities, particularly in low-income households, contribute to their reassignment of roles (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Financial hardship, job instability, or underemployment often catalyzes this shift. In contrast, their wives, who may have achieved higher educational qualifications or more stable income sources, often take on the breadwinning role (Oláh et al., 2018). This reversal underscores how socioeconomic status intersects with gender expectations, influencing family decisions and individual identities (Tanyag, 2017).

As educational and career opportunities for women continue to grow, particularly in urban settings, more families are adapting to pragmatic role-sharing arrangements (Oláh et al., 2018; Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). These shifts reveal the complex negotiations within households where income and educational disparities reshape traditional norms. In many cases, the househusband role is not solely a voluntary decision but a product of economic necessity and strategic adaptation to contemporary realities. According to Kuteesa et al. (2024), several efforts to challenge and break away from traditional gender roles have gained momentum, promoting gender equality, equal opportunities, and the dismantling of gender stereotypes. This includes organizations and programs encouraging men to embrace nurturing and caregiving roles, and empowering women to pursue careers and leadership positions traditionally dominated by men. The aim is to create a more inclusive society where individuals can express their talents, abilities, and aspirations, irrespective of gender. Over the past three decades, the female labor force has increased globally (Baclig, 2022), challenging the traditional division of labor. Thus, the shift towards gender equality in education and employment opportunities has contributed to the rise of working wives and househusbands.

However, societal attitudes and stereotypes still challenge them, and cultural attitudes must evolve and embrace their role. Understanding the narratives of househusbands with working wives offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of household gender roles. The authors intended to shed light on the roles, challenges, and societal perceptions faced by househusbands through exploring their experiences and how they affect individual well-being. By recognizing and exploring these experiences, people can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment that values diverse family models, challenges traditional gender norms, and promotes equality and understanding for all individuals, regardless of gender.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research approach with a narrative research design. This design was chosen to explore and interpret human experiences, meanings, and social phenomena in a contextualized manner. Through qualitative data collection and analysis, such as observation and interviews, the study aimed to acquire the richness of human actions, cognitions, and interpersonal relations. Using narrative analysis, the authors could interpret their stories to understand how they experienced events, feelings, and decisions. This allowed the participants to organize and convey their experiences in a coherent and timely sequence.

2.2 Research Locale

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of househusbands, its scope is limited in several ways. The participant group was composed exclusively of individuals residing in Cavite, Philippines, without a distinction between urban and rural settings. This may limit the generalizability of the findings, as geographical

contexts can influence social norms, economic opportunities, and perceptions of caregiving roles. Furthermore, participants were all from nuclear family setups. They shared relatively similar socioeconomic backgrounds, which may not fully capture the diversity of family structures or experiences across different class or cultural contexts. Future studies would benefit from including participants from varied geographic locations, extended or non-traditional family arrangements, and a wider range of socioeconomic statuses to gain a more holistic view of the dynamics shaping male caregiving roles in the Philippine context.

2.3 Research Participants

The study collected data from five (5) participants who met specific selection criteria to ensure relevance and reliability (see Table 1). Participants were required to: have children living in the household, serve as full-time househusbands, be the primary caregivers and homemakers, have a partner who is employed, have at least two months of experience as a househusband, and be living in a nuclear family setup. By selecting a small sample size, the authors could allocate resources effectively and conduct a more in-depth analysis of each participant's experiences. The participants are all in the middle adulthood stage. Three of them engaged in side hustles as a service tricycle driver, an on-call foreman, and a farmer, while the other two were unemployed during data collection. Educational backgrounds varied: one participant had completed college, another had some college education, two had high school education, and one had completed elementary education. All participants were legally married, with family monthly incomes predominantly falling below the Filipino class threshold of ₱10,957, while one participant reported an income within the range of ₱10,957 to ₱21,914.

Table 1. *Overview of Participants' Profile*

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Pseudonym	P1-E3	P2-C2	P3-H4	P4-C2	P5-H8
Age	39	39	47	41	50
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
Educational background	Elementary	College	Highschool	College	Highschool
No. of children	3	2	4	2	8
Sideline job	Farmer	Service	N/A	N/A	Foreman
Monthly family earnings	Below P10,957	Below P10,957	Below P10,957	Below P10,957	P10,957- P21,914
Duration of being a househusband	2 years	6 years	2 months	3 years	2 years

2.4 Research Instrument

Data was collected through individual face-to-face interviews using a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide that has undergone expert validation from three psychometricians and an audio recording device for transcription.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The authors developed an interview guide containing questions designed to explore the lived experiences of househusbands with working wives. To ensure the validity and appropriateness of the instrument, the interview guide was reviewed and validated by experts and subsequently translated into Filipino for better comprehension by participants. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select respondents who met the study's criteria. Before conducting the interviews, participants were informed about the study's objectives, potential risks and benefits, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality measures in place. The timing and location of the interviews were arranged based on participants' availability and convenience. Pseudonyms were used to keep their identity confidential. Participants were required to sign an informed consent form before proceeding with the interview. During the interviews, the authors followed the structured questions in the guide while encouraging participants to provide in-depth narratives, including their thoughts, emotions, sensations, and recollections. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. After the interviews, the authors thanked the participants for their involvement. When necessary, they conducted follow-up inquiries to clarify or gather additional information.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical guidelines to ensure the study's reliability and validity while safeguarding participants' rights. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits before voluntarily agreeing to participate. Additionally,

informed consent for recording devices was secured, allowing participants to approve using audio recording for interviews while maintaining their privacy. Participants were granted full autonomy in their research participation, with the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. Storage and disposal protocols were implemented to protect sensitive data, ensuring that research materials were securely stored in a protected area to prevent unauthorized access, loss, or theft. After the study, proper disposal methods were followed per ethical regulations. Furthermore, strict confidentiality measures were upheld to protect participants' personal information and research data. The authors ensured that all collected data remained secure and inaccessible to unauthorized individuals. The study was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines established by the profession of Psychology and the University, ensuring responsible and ethical research practices.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The findings are organized chronologically, detailing participants' experiences across six phases, each highlighting the evolution of their roles and identities. Participants' excerpts illustrate these phases, offering insights into the personal, economic, and societal factors influencing their transitions. While the findings provide significant insights into the lives of househusbands, they must be understood within the context of certain limitations. The research was conducted in Cavite, Philippines, without indicating whether participants were from urban or rural areas. These geographical environments may influence access to support networks, employment, and exposure to changing gender norms, potentially affecting how caregiving roles are perceived and experienced.

3.1 Phase 1: Pre-Househusband Life

Before assuming domestic roles, participants lived by traditional male breadwinner expectations, facing demanding work schedules and societal pressures. Their identities were intertwined with professional success, making the transition to caregiving a profound shift. For instance, one participant recalls the long commutes' physical and emotional toll (P3-H4), while another describes the emotional cost of being an Overseas Filipino Worker (P4-C2).

"Before I became a househusband, it was tough because I had to wake up early in the morning and travel to work" - P3-H4

"I was an OFW... far away from my family" P4-C2

"I was a general foreman in a company that built structures in Makati, Robinson, Tacloban, Isabela, and other places." P5-H8

These experiences highlight the complexity of moving from a provider to a caregiver, with participants navigating significant changes in identity and societal expectations. The transition underscores a shift from fulfilling prosocial roles emphasizing financial and familial stability to a caregiving role demanding emotional and psychological adjustment. This change challenges traditional gender roles, highlighting the need for greater societal flexibility in defining masculinity. The phenomenon of left-behind fathers further illustrates this shift. As more Filipino women migrate for employment opportunities abroad, men are increasingly assuming primary caregiving responsibilities (Lam & Yeoh, 2016). This role reversal disrupts traditional paternal roles and necessitates a redefinition of masculinity within the familial context.

3.2 Phase 2: Family Situations Leading to Role Assignment

Economic instability is one of the primary reasons men assume the househusband role. Financial challenges are among the most significant drivers of role reassignment in families. Studies indicate that job loss, low wages, and unpredictable work conditions often compel families to redistribute household responsibilities (Amparo et al., 2024). For instance, P1-E3 reported that his salary was insufficient to cover daily household expenses, leading to his decision to stay home while his spouse took on paid employment. Similarly, P5-H8 faced unpredictable job conditions, making it impractical to maintain steady financial contributions.

"It is not enough... my salary is not enough for the daily expenses." P1-E3

In some cases, job loss directly triggered the transition into caregiving. Participants such as P3-H8 and P4-C2 found themselves unemployed, forcing them to take on domestic responsibilities.

"I lost my job" P3-H8

Job loss serves as a significant turning point in these transitions. Participants such as P3-H8 and P4-C2 faced unexpected unemployment, requiring them to take on domestic responsibilities. This situation aligns with broader research indicating that economic downturns and labor market shifts disproportionately impact men in industries like construction, manufacturing, and transportation, pushing them toward alternative roles at home (Agbayani et al., 2019).

While financial hardship was central in triggering the role shift, some participants also cited personal health issues, family dynamics, or simply a desire to be more present for their children as contributing factors. These less tangible motivations suggest that caregiving roles not only react to necessity but may also reflect evolving personal values, preferences, and changing cultural norms. This aligns with broader studies highlighting the growing appeal of engaged fatherhood and emotional involvement in child-rearing as markers of modern masculinity (Doucet, 2018; Lee & Lee, 2018).

3.3 Phase 3: Family Reactions and Social Dynamics

Participants faced societal and familial pressures upon transitioning into househusband roles. While some experienced judgment and unsolicited advice from relatives, others found support from friends and community members. These external reactions reflected the persistence of traditional gender expectations, which often led to self-doubt and emotional strain.

"My sibling told me to go back to work because I am the man" P4-C2

"At first, of course, they mocked you for staying at home" P1-E3

For example, P1-E3 faced ridicule for staying at home, and P2-C2's relatives questioned his family's financial stability after his resignation. P4-C2's sibling also urged him to return to work, reinforcing the breadwinner norm. Despite these pressures, participants remained committed to their families, showing resilience despite societal skepticism. Gonalons-Pons and Gangl (2021) support the idea that, despite evolving gender norms, the expectation for men to be primary providers remains deeply ingrained. This persistent social pressure intensifies the emotional and psychological challenges that househusbands face. Societal stereotypes about masculinity often create psychological strain, with househusbands feeling inadequate or anxious due to the expectation that men should be providers. Unlike women, who often receive societal validation for caregiving, househusbands face criticism that challenges their masculinity. A lack of recognition for their caregiving role can intensify these feelings (Lee & Lee, 2016).

While participants felt frustrated, they also found empowerment through social connections. P2-C2 and P3-H4 experienced positive social shifts, forming stronger community relationships. As they adapted, the emotional support from spouses, friends, and neighbors helped boost their confidence and foster a sense of belonging.

"So now, we have become close because my neighbors, who are also in the same line of work as me, interact in the same way, so they are the ones I have become close with. However, there have been big changes because I've made more friends now. Yes, I have improved. It is better because when they see me, sometimes when I go out, we chat... that is how our bond was formed." P3-H4

These experiences underscore the emotional complexity of men stepping into caregiving roles. Unlike women, who often receive societal validation for caregiving, househusbands face criticism that challenges their masculinity. A lack of recognition for their caregiving role can intensify these feelings (Guansing et al., 2023). However, supportive networks can mitigate these challenges, enhancing their psychological resilience. Encouragement from others, such as positive feedback from neighbors, helps build self-esteem and reinforces their caregiving identity.

Moreover, encouragement from others boosted their confidence, validated their choice, and created a supportive environment. P1-E3 found emotional support from friends helpful in managing criticism, while P2-C2 felt reassured by positive feedback on his parenting. P3-H4 gained self-esteem from neighbors' praise for his

household efforts. Participants' experiences show that when househusbands feel valued by their communities, they are more engaged and effective in their caregiving roles. Supportive networks can mitigate these challenges, enhancing their psychological resilience. Encouragement from others, such as positive feedback from neighbors, helps build self-esteem and reinforces their caregiving identity (Ike et al., 2023). Encouraging and respecting men in caregiving roles not only benefits their mental health but also promotes more balanced gender roles within families. These experiences underscore the emotional complexity of men stepping into caregiving roles. Many men experience an initial struggle with societal perceptions and personal identity, as masculinity is traditionally associated with financial provision (Amparo et al., 2024). However, over time, supportive family dynamics and positive reinforcement from spouses and communities can help ease this transition.

3.4 Phase 4: Preparations for the Househusband Role

Becoming a househusband involves huge psychological, emotional, and practical adjustments. Unlike regular work, managing domestic responsibilities and childcare requires more organizational ability, flexibility, and resilience. Participants emphasized the importance of resilience and adaptability, prioritizing family needs over personal aspirations. P2-C2 and P5-H8 highlighted emotional stability as a key factor in successfully managing uncertainties, a finding supported by studies on role reversals in family structures (Agbayani et al., 2019). For instance, P1-E3 puts much effort into planning his daily routine to coordinate household work and self-care. He lays out a structured morning routine that involves preparing breakfast, showering, and starting household chores. Similarly, P3-H8 places much emphasis on his child's school routine while, at the same time, undertaking cooking, cleaning, and childcare responsibilities.

"Before you sleep, you think about what you must do the next day. It makes your sleep better, and when you wake up, you have breakfast and coffee... then a shower, and after that, work starts. I even cook, drive the kids to school, and sometimes do laundry too." P1-E3

"I wake up early every day, especially because my youngest is studying. I wake up early to avoid disturbing him since he still has to go to school. I wake up, cook, and then drive him to school." P3-H8

Becoming a househusband involves huge psychological, emotional, and practical adjustments. Unlike regular work, managing domestic responsibilities and childcare requires organizational ability, flexibility, and resilience. Current literature shows that role changes, particularly those against societal norms, can initially be stressful but eventually lead to higher personal satisfaction and better family relationships (Amparo et al., 2024). Evidence supports the significance of establishing routines in effective home management. Establishing an attainable daily routine makes people feel more in charge of their plan and activities, enhancing efficiency and reducing tensions (Balmet, 2014). Moreover, assuming mutual home chores fosters unity and mutual development between partners, leading to an equal and harmonious home setup (Bhalaji, 2022).

3.5 Phase 5: Experiences as Househusbands

The househusband role contradicts traditional gender roles and requires much adaptation. Although some men are pushed into this role by circumstance, others become primary caregivers. Their experiences depend on various factors, such as time management, child-rearing issues, discipline practices, emotional fulfillment, and scope for personal growth. This part discusses these topics in greater depth, exploring how househusbands organize their work and remake masculinity in family life today.

Time Management: Juggling Multiple Roles

One of the most significant challenges for househusbands is the successful execution of several household chores. As others use schedules to keep everything in check, others learn how to multitask. Time management has been discovered to be a necessary skill in caregiving, as the capability to manage household chores and childcare tasks and self-wellness is vital in maintaining household harmony (Guansing et al., 2023). P3-H4 preferred multitasking as his preferred approach, juggling the tasks of cleaning, cooking, and taking children to school simultaneously. In contrast, however, a regular daily routine in P2-C2 was designed to ensure uniformity and effectiveness. Househusbands create personalized plans according to the particular needs of their households. The plans prioritize their flexibility and adoption of traditionally feminine roles.

Parenting Challenges: Adjusting to Full-Time Parenting

Most househusbands encounter difficulties in converting to full-time parenting, particularly those with less experience in child-rearing before assuming their home duties. Empirical evidence indicates that men who become caregivers feel incompetent and uncertain as they have to learn parenting skills that were not familiar to them (Francisco & Francisco, 2022). For example, househusbands formerly breadwinners may feel compelled to "prove" themselves as parents in the home. Role reversal can be stressful since men are stereotypically not caregivers but providers.

Disciplinary Approaches: Navigating Authority and Compassion

Parenting involves setting boundaries and using discipline; however, househusbands use different approaches in discipline and controlling the child's behavior. Some use a more understanding and conversation-based approach, whereas others apply traditional discipline methods. P2-C2 highlighted the need to know the reasons behind misbehavior before punishing it. This position is consistent with evidence indicating that positive reinforcement and open communication facilitate stronger parent-child relationships (Shah, 2023). P1-E3, however, sometimes employed strict discipline like spanking, which he disagreed with his wife. These diverse approaches illustrate the fluidity of fatherhood and the challenge of balancing authority and emotional closeness.

Love and Caregiving: Expressing Affection in Different Ways

Househusbands show their children that they love them by carrying out routine caregiving tasks. Most individuals show their love by serving, including preparing food, preparing the children for school, and assisting with homework. These actions align with findings regarding the "love languages" theory, which explains that people express and receive love in various forms (Francisco & Francisco, 2022). Physical affection is how some househusbands show love, e.g., hugging their kids. Others put quality time first, ensuring they are available for their children's milestones and routines. However, by taking on the role of caregivers, these men short-circuit the traditional masculine constructions that identify power with emotional regulation.

Personal Growth: Learning and Adapting to New Responsibilities

To be a househusband, men must usually learn new cooking, cleaning, and home maintenance skills. With time, most men are self-assured and proud to be able to contribute to their homes. Scientific research shows that men who engage in caregiving activities tend to learn more emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills (Guansing et al., 2023). P2-C2, for instance, learned to prepare and cook food for his family, something he had no experience doing prior to this. P5-H8 upgraded his household maintenance skills, thus making their home life convenient and operational. These experiences enable a broader redefinition of gender roles, demonstrating that care is not necessarily associated with women.

Happiness and Fulfillment: Finding Joy in the Role

Although there are initial challenges, most househusbands ultimately experience happiness and fulfillment in their caregiving roles. The research indicates that men who actively participate in their children's lives have greater emotional well-being and satisfaction (Shah, 2023). P5-H8's happiness was his ability to talk to his children and see them grow. P2-C2 was proud of his children's personal and academic achievements and recognized his contribution to their growth. This sense of completion comes from a redefinition of masculinity that emphasizes emotional connection and care over conventional definitions based on economic support.

Navigating Gender Norms: Challenging Societal Expectations

Societal judgment is one of the biggest challenges for househusbands. Traditional gender roles position men as breadwinners, and caregivers are judged. They are condemned by extended families or peers who perceive their role as non-traditional (Shah, 2023). But most househusbands discover how to play by these rules by confidently taking ownership of their caregiving responsibilities. Their experiences work to redefine gender norms, establishing that men are as nurturing and competent in the home as women.

Routine and Efficiency: Establishing Structure in Daily Life

Househusbands develop systematic schedules to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. This ensures order in the house and that all tasks are completed professionally. The daily routines generally include breakfast, getting school-going children ready for school, and doing chores around the house. Afternoon activities may include meal

preparation, errands, recreational activities, or rest. By creating an efficient schedule, househusbands enable a clean home setting and thus prove themselves effective caretakers. Research indicates routine daily practices are key to fostering family care and well-being, specifically among men stepping into caregiving. Male caretaker homemakers who establish routine frameworks have recorded less stress and more effectiveness in discharging their roles (Hackensack Meridian Health, 2020; Tuminello, 2020). Repetitive and routine protocols have been shown to enhance control perceptions, lessen apprehension, and foster mental stability, which is important amid changes. Househusbands' lives uncover the changing gender roles in modern families. Although they face challenges in time management, child care, and social expectations, they also enjoy satisfaction, personal growth, and a sense of achievement in their work. Their lives uncover the importance of being flexible and persistent and prove that caring is not a gendered activity but a human one.

3.6 Phase 6: Reflection and Valuation of Experience

This phase emphasizes how househusbands challenge traditional gender roles and redefine their sense of masculinity through caregiving and household responsibilities. The participants reflect on transforming their identities, relationships, and sense of fulfillment. Rather than perceiving their roles as diminishing their masculinity, they see them as empowering and central to the family's well-being.

Masculinity Being Flexible

One key theme is the idea of masculinity being flexible, rejecting the notion that fulfilling household responsibilities makes a man less masculine (Doucet, 2018). For example, P2-C2 boldly asserts:

"A real man, of course, because being a househusband does not make a man any less of a man."

Similarly, P3-H4 emphasizes that true masculinity lies not in dominance or rigid gender roles but in kindness, emotional strength, and non-violence, challenging societal perceptions that associate caregiving with weakness. These reflections align with psychological research suggesting that househusbands often experience a more profound sense of fulfillment and empowerment as they embrace caregiving roles. Rather than being a loss of status, their involvement in household tasks enhances their family life and deepens their connection with their children and spouse. The evolving role of househusbands challenges traditional notions of masculinity, emphasizing that engaging in household responsibilities does not diminish a man's masculinity. Research indicates that stay-at-home fathers often experience a more profound sense of fulfillment and empowerment as they embrace caregiving roles, enhancing family life and strengthening connections with their children and spouses (Lee & Lee, 2018). For these men, nurturing and caring for their families becomes central to their identities, providing a profound sense of purpose and pride.

Building Open-Mindedness and Emotional Resilience

Another common theme relates to building open-mindedness and emotional resilience. Earlier research has shown that resilience, accompanied by adaptive coping strategies in caregivers, is associated with favorable psychological outcomes, lower levels of stress, and better well-being (García-Alberca et al., 2019). Participants identify the need for adaptability while performing household responsibilities and the emotional calmness needed to manage family relationships. For instance, P1-E3 underscores the importance of staying calm and adaptable, especially in dealing with the emotional intricacies of caregiving. Similarly, P5-H8 highlights the importance of emotional resilience since he knows that staying calm and avoiding negative thought patterns during altercations improves his relationship with his wife. This is supported by research that shows that skills in regulating emotions, like cognitive reappraisal and sustaining a positive outlook, are significant in building resilience among caregivers (Conversano et al., 2023). This psychological shift towards emotional openness helps househusbands adjust to changing roles and fosters more harmonious relationships. Their ability to embrace new perspectives and responsibilities fosters personal growth and strengthens their emotional connections with their families.

Deepened Familial Relationships

The final theme centers on the deepened familial relationships that emerge from active caregiving. Many househusbands express pride and fulfillment in their roles as caregivers. P2-C2, for instance, explains that his decision to become a househusband stemmed from his desire to prioritize his children's well-being, emphasizing that his role as a caregiver is a form of love and protection for his family. P3-H4 similarly reflects on the importance

of conflict resolution within the household, recognizing that maintaining peace in front of his child is crucial for their emotional development. Research indicates that fathers who engage in caregiving experience stronger emotional bonds with their children and greater family cohesion (Lamb, 2010). P5-H8 finds pride in managing his children's needs and activities, demonstrating househusbands' joy and pride in their contributions to family life (Cabrera et al., 2018).

"I am proud because...I am proud of myself because I could care for my child's needs." P5-H8

The reconceptualization of masculinity that these narratives account for transcends the simple redefining of roles in the household; it works actively to alter wider society's discussions about gender and fairness. When men take up caregiving roles assigned as feminine, they visibly challenge rigid gender binaries between provider and carer. This visible disruption of gendered labor norms functions as a personal adjustment and a political statement that contests the societal structures upholding rigid gender roles. Over time, such role reversals can, in principle, force institutional and community attitudes towards change, towards a shared recognition that caregiving is not feminine but a shared human obligation. Such altered perceptions can, in turn, further facilitate a culture valuing emotional labor, empathy, and domestic skills as skills for all individuals regardless of gender.

Overall, the study suggests that being a househusband redefines their masculinity and enhances their emotional and psychological well-being. Their deepened familial connections, emotional resilience, and fulfillment from caregiving roles challenge traditional gender norms and underscore the evolving nature of fatherhood and masculinity in modern family life. Their experiences demonstrate that masculinity is not a fixed construct but rather a fluid and evolving expression of responsibility, care, and emotional engagement.

4.0 Conclusion

This study offers a deeper understanding of the transformative experiences of househusbands in the Philippines, shedding light on how traditional gender roles are being redefined within households. The findings reveal that economic challenges often drive these men to transition from breadwinners to primary caregivers, reshaping their identities and expanding their roles within the family. Through this shift, participants demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and dedication, challenging conventional notions of masculinity and domesticity. Underscoring the importance of exploring gender role reversal in the context of evolving family dynamics, particularly in traditionally patriarchal societies. The participants' narratives reflect a profound shift in responsibilities and perceptions of caregiving and homemaking as integral aspects of their identity. These men redefined fatherhood and masculinity by embracing non-traditional roles, creating more inclusive and supportive family environments.

The participants initially prioritized earning income with minimal involvement in household tasks, adhering to traditional breadwinner roles that left caregiving and domestic responsibilities to their partners. Financial hardships, such as low income and job loss, prompted a transition to becoming househusbands, showcasing their adaptability and commitment to their families. As househusbands, they developed personalized strategies to manage their time and responsibilities effectively, balancing household chores, caregiving, and personal obligations. Despite initial unfamiliarity, they adapted to tasks like cooking, cleaning, and disciplining children, enhancing their competence and confidence over time. This role shifting brought a sense of accomplishment, fulfillment, and pride, as participants redefined traditional gender roles and embraced caregiving with positivity. Their proactive approach fostered stronger family bonds, mutual respect, and a more inclusive perspective on family dynamics. By breaking conventional norms, they demonstrated that caregiving and homemaking transcend gender, creating a supportive and equitable environment within their households.

As gender role reversals become more common, this study highlights the need for societal acceptance and structural support to facilitate these transitions. Based on the findings of this study, this research proposes the implementation of gender-sensitive and inclusive policies that recognize the efforts of househusbands. Such policies may include gender-neutral parental leave and reintegration programs for full-time caregivers. Schools and community organizations should, in turn, promote awareness through gender sensitivity training, inclusion of non-traditional family roles in curricula, and campaigns aimed at de-stigmatizing male participation in caregiving. Local government offices and Non-Governmental Organizations can, in turn, develop support networks and skill development courses for male caregivers. At the same time, advocacy groups and the media

should be encouraged to promote positive portrayals of househusbands to deconstruct dominant stereotypes. Finally, developing a national plan for constructing gender-inclusive family structures is proposed to empower institutions to promote supportive and equitable environments for all caregivers.

Future studies should explore the broader societal implications of these changes. For instance, how do communities and workplaces respond to this redefinition of gender roles? What policies and resources can better support families navigating similar transitions? Additionally, further research could explore the intersection of class, education, and regional differences in shaping the experiences of househusbands and the long-term impact of these roles on family dynamics and gender equality.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors contributed equally to all sections of the study. They have thoroughly reviewed and approved the final version of the work.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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9.0 References

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