

# Ang tagapagtaguyod na anak for Filipino adults: an exploratory research

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – In Filipino culture, children often take on the role of family “breadwinner,” providing financial support and sharing family responsibilities. However, this role is typically viewed narrowly as that of a financial provider. To address this, this study explores the “Tagapagtaguyod na Anak,” aiming to offer a more nuanced and culturally relevant understanding of the broader responsibilities and dynamics involved in this role within Filipino families.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This exploratory study focused on single adult children aged 18–29 years and middle-aged parents aged 40–60 years old. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically to explore the phenomenon of “Tagapagtaguyod na anak.”

**Findings** – The findings reveal that “tagapagtaguyod na anak” provide financial, emotional and social support to their families. This role is shaped by parental expectations and the child’s volition. This role develops out of necessity and is influenced by the child’s understanding of family needs, a sense of responsibility, family values and gratitude (Utang na Loob). Implications for tagasalo personality and societal norms and intergenerational family dynamics are also discussed.

**Originality/value** – This study delved into the concept of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” in Filipino families, distinguishing it from the “tagasalo personality” identified by Carandang (1987) and Udarbe (2001). It highlights the distinct responsibilities of this role, emphasizing the influence of cultural norms, gender expectations and socioeconomic factors. Hence, it offers valuable insights into the Filipino family dynamics.

**Keywords** Tagapagtaguyod, Filipino adults, Sense of responsibility, Filipino values

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Family members must fulfill certain roles. The father traditionally serves as the head of the family and the primary means of support. On the other hand, the mother is responsible for managing all household duties and caring for children. However, in today’s society, considering the economic status and capacity of parents to support their children, there exists a

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phenomenon of “breadwinner.” Breadwinners are the main source of income in a household. They typically pay the majority of household expenses and provide financial support for their dependents (Kagan, 2023). Breadwinners appear to be prevalent in Filipino households. It is anchored on the core value of being family-oriented where working adults provide and support the financial needs of the family (Inquirer, 2019). This is also linked to the instilled belief that families should always come first, and throughout adulthood, one must support the family financially, emotionally and mentally (Cardona, 2020). These illustrate how Filipino families are closely knit, and there is a traditional relationship that causes Filipinos to prioritize family (Arellano-Carandang, 1979; Miralao, 1997; Tarroja, 2010; Gozum, 2020). As such, it is unsurprising that the Philippines is one of the nations in Asia with a collectivist culture and a strong family structure (Alesina & Giuliano, 2013).

Related to the breadwinning phenomenon, this research investigated the phenomena of “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” The term “tagapagtaguyod” is employed in conjunction with and as a Filipino translation of the phenomenon of “breadwinner.” “Tagapagtaguyod” is a noun defined as the “*tanging inaasahan o paunang sandigan*” (Wordhippo, n.d.). The root word “taguyod” means to provide for and support (Tagalog.com Dictionary, n.d.b). In the context of the Filipino family, this term significantly defines how the breadwinner is, considering that breadwinners support and provide for their family’s needs, while “Na” is the component that corresponds to “of” (Kaut, 1961). This study also uses the term “anak” as a translation of the English word, child. “Anak” is a gender-neutral name for one’s offspring, either “son” or “daughter” (Tagalog.com Dictionary, n.d.a).

*Tagasalo* theory, first coined by Carandang (1987), served as the basis for this study. Carandang referred to the term “tagasalo” as a syndrome that affects Filipino children and prompts them to assume the role of caregiver or the one who leads the family in times of need. Every family has a *tagasalo*, which is shaped by societal expectations that female members of the family, particularly first-born or middle-born ones, are often tasked with household chores early in life. Carandang described *tagasalo* as gender-specific and tied to birth order, often leading to traits of passivity, compulsiveness, dependency and self-consciousness. However, Udarbe (2001) described *tagasalo* as a personality rather than a syndrome. She identified nine themes that described *tagasalo* children who have (1) a sense of responsibility; (2) the ability to listen; (3) the ability to mediate conflict; (4) a need for harmony; (5) a need for control; (6) perceive parents as central; (7) have the capacity for caring; (8) *Tagasalo* as siblings and (9) capacity for emotional distance. The “tagapagtaguyod na anak” supports the *Tagasalo* theory’s claim that children serve as the family’s foundation when parents are absent or unable to care for them. It is especially significant in light of Udarbe’s assertion that the role of family *tagasalo* is gender-neutral and not based on birth order because any member of the family who is emotionally, physically and financially capable can impact the dynamics of the family. Hence, a Filipino family’s “tagapagtaguyod na anak” may possess a *tagasalo* personality and serve a variety of roles beyond simply giving financial support.

Given the paucity of research and understanding on the phenomenon of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” in Filipino households, as well as the lack of contextualization of the breadwinner role within Filipino families, this study explored how “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is understood by Filipino adults, specifically those who are middle-aged parents and single adult children. It may contribute to a deeper and contextual understanding of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” that exists in a Filipino family.

## Methods

### Design

This qualitative research utilized an exploratory design to discover the nature of a problem and help gain a deeper knowledge of the phenomena (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Thus, this method is used in this study as it focuses on exploring Filipinos’ perceptions of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” rather than their personal experiences of this phenomenon.

### *Participants*

In total, 16 Filipino adults from Metro Manila were selected to explore perspectives on the *tagapagtaguyod na anak* role. Participants were grouped into two age ranges: 18–29 for single adult children and 40–60 for middle-aged parents. The selection criteria included age, civil status and residence, but factors such as sex, birth order, occupation and socioeconomic status were not considered. In this context, “children” refers to those aged 18–29, interpreted through the Filipino term *anak*, meaning “offspring,” which encompasses both “son” and “daughter” without implying literal childhood. Legally, this age range falls within the Philippine “youth” category, defined as ages 15–30 ([Republic Act No. 8044, 1995](#)), marking a developmental phase toward responsible adulthood ([Guiao, 2024](#)). Hence, their role as *tagapagtaguyod na anak* becomes more clearly defined within the family, where they play a significant role in supporting family dynamics. Additionally, single adults were interviewed online via Google Meet, while middle-aged parents participated in in-person interviews, providing insights into both generations’ views on the *tagapagtaguyod na anak* role.

### *Instruments*

This study utilized a demographic questionnaire as a screening tool to verify if the participants fall to the research participant criteria. Subsequently, an interview questionnaire was employed, initially containing 10 open-ended questions. However, upon the study’s pilot testing, three sub-questions and one main question were added. Conducting a pilot test validated the content, organization and appropriateness of the interview questions. An example of the interview question is, “How will you define the phenomena, ‘tagapagtaguyod na anak’? (*Ano ang iyong depinisyon ng ‘tagapagtaguyod na anak’?*).”

### *Data gathering procedure*

A purposive sampling technique was employed to gather participants via Facebook and Messenger, where they were asked to respond to a demographic questionnaire. Others were recruited through direct approaches or in-person meetings. Participants were screened to verify age eligibility and consent to participate before signing an informed consent form and proceeding with the semi-structured interview.

### *Data analysis*

This study employed thematic analysis, which is defined by [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#) as a systematic method for identifying, organizing and understanding patterns of meaning (themes) found in the data set. The process involved familiarizing with the data, coding, theme development, reviewing themes, detailed investigation and creating thematic maps and writing the formal report. Subsequently, the data analyzed were validated by two of the participants and a peer to ensure that the themes generated reflect their understanding of the phenomenon of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” This process led to structured qualitative data gathering and analysis.

### *Ethical considerations*

The researcher adhered to ethical guidelines throughout the data collection process to ensure the study’s quality and integrity. The research ensured participants’ voluntary involvement, informed consent and confidentiality. Anonymity was strictly maintained according to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring that no identifying information would appear in published or reported documents.

## **Results and discussion**

The study explored Filipino adults’ understanding of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” phenomenon. The analysis led to the definition of the phenomena, the birth order, the

gender, characteristics, qualifications and the roles of “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” Additionally, it has identified the factors that led a child to take on this role, the Filipino values that serve as the foundation for this “tagapagtaguyod na anak” and the perspectives and feelings of Filipino adults on the existence of this phenomenon in a Filipino family.

#### *A. Understanding of Filipino adults on “tagapagtaguyod na anak”*

*Definition of tagapagtaguyod.* The findings indicated that for Filipino adults, “tagapagtaguyod” is defined as *nagbibigay*, *nagpapasan*, *namamahala* and *nag-aahon*. Among these themes, the majority of Filipino adults define it as *nagbibigay* or someone who provides for the family’s basic needs that may be a result of the parent’s incapability to provide for the family. This definition reflects Carandang’s description of “tagasalo” who serves as the person who takes care of the family or helps when in need (Carandang, 1987 as cited by Tarroja, 2010). This definition is similar to how tagapagtaguyod is defined as *nagpapasan* or bearing the responsibility of providing the family financial, emotional, spiritual and social support. They can also act as the family’s leader or *namamahala*, guiding both their siblings and the family as a dependable figure. Being regarded as a dependable person could demonstrate how the “tagapagtaguyod” is defined as someone who lifts (*nag-aahon*) the family from poverty. These definitions encompass financial and economic support aligned with the phenomenon of a breadwinner, who serves as the primary source of income within a household. They often pay the majority of household expenses and assist their dependents financially (Kagan, 2023). These definitions highlight emotional and social support, consistent with Atenas et al. (2018), who define *pagsalo* as the act of the *tagasalo* (catcher), where young adults assume familial responsibilities and provide emotional support. In general, “Tagapagtaguyod na Anak” refers to a person who is responsible for providing the family with financial, emotional and social support. They guide the family relationships and help in improving their quality of life.

*Birth order and gender of tagapagtaguyod na anak.* Birth order. Filipino adults believe that the eldest children or “*panganay na anak*” typically fulfill the role of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” as they are often the first to graduate from college, obtain employment and assume financial responsibilities for the family. This aligns with Carillo’s (2016) study of “*panganay na anak*” often becoming the breadwinners of their families, which they do so as a form of *pagpaparaya* or self-sacrifice.

However, three participants contended that being a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is typically associated with middle children, based on their personal experiences and birth order. One participant observed that middle children often aim to please the family and prioritize its needs. She suggested that eldest children, being more nurtured, might feel less obligated to help during times of need. In contrast, middle children, feeling like the “second-best,” seek their parents’ approval and appreciation. This reflects the claim of Carandang (1987), as cited by Udarbe (2001), that it is typically the middle children who feel unappreciated and may behave in ways deemed acceptable to gain attention.

Gender. Filipino adults believe that any gender can assume the role of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” when circumstances demand it, reflecting a shift from traditional gender roles to an emphasis on individual qualities, skills and maturity. This supports Udarbe’s (2001) claim that the “tagasalo” role is not gender-specific, making both the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” and “tagasalo” roles inclusive of all genders. Nevertheless, Filipino adults still perceive women as more likely to fill this role. It supported Carandang’s (1987) as cited by Udarbe (2001) claim that a “tagasalo” child is often the family’s female child. Additionally, it resonates with Bernardo, Clemente and Liem (2014) that Filipino women appear to value social connections, familial ties, mobility, independence, morality, social consciousness and benevolence more than men.

*Characteristics of tagapagtaguyod na anak.* The findings indicated a range of characteristics that Filipino adults expect for a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” to possess. It includes being responsible, self-sacrificing, self-sufficient and excellent.

Responsible. The majority of the Filipino adults described “tagapagtaguyod na anak” as responsible, which entails being hardworking, persistent, resourceful, strong-minded and disciplined. These characteristics are essential for a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” to embody, as this role encompasses a big responsibility that may affect the family. It explains how the characteristics of “tagasalo” and “tagapagtaguyod na anak” are intertwined since they both reveal a sense of responsibility. These characteristics are then embodied for the benefit of the family (Udarbe, 2001).

One of the Filipino adults emphasized that a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is discerning of their parent’s needs. They are emotionally and morally responsive toward their family. It serves as an illustration of how a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” values their parents, which is pertinent to the *tagasalo* personality that perceives parents as central. They strive to maintain harmony and do various duties to please their parents and relieve them from the burden of responsibility (Udarbe, 2001). For middle children, being discerning might be a way to gain parental acceptance and appreciation, while for eldest and youngest children, it helps maintain a positive connection with their parents.

Self-sacrificing. Being self-sacrificing entails having the willingness to put their desires and goals aside for the benefit of their family. The capacity for caring is one of the themes Udarbe (2001) found in *tagasalo* personality. This theme encompasses thoughtfulness, generosity, and approachability. This self-sacrificing trait aligns closely with the *tagasalo* personality, highlighting a deep drive to extend beyond oneself and support others.

Self-sufficient. For two Filipino adults, a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is self-sufficient. These children have the resources necessary to meet their necessities as well as those of their families. They handle their responsibilities independently and avoid relying on others. This finding is consistent with Udarbe’s (2001) *tagasalo* personality of the need for control. *Tagasalo* individuals are expected to take full responsibility for their own lives. Additionally, self-sufficiency is linked to the capacity for emotional distance, as *tagasalo* individuals often distance themselves from their challenges, relying on their judgment to avoid feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty while managing family burdens.

Excellent. Being an excellent child is one of the characteristics that a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” possesses from the perspective of Filipino adults. These children excel in their education, perceived as role models for their younger siblings and cousins and are expected to exhibit proper behavior. Through their competence, knowledge and skills, it becomes an indicator of how well a child can fulfill their responsibilities (Kelan, 2008).

*Qualifications of tagapagtaguyod na anak.* For Filipino adults, a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” may or may not be a college graduate, but they must be *financially independent*. This means having a stable income to contribute significantly to family expenses and provide immediate support during financial difficulties.

A “tagapagtaguyod na anak” can also be a *working student* who supports both their family’s finances and their educational needs. As noted by Burgos *et al.* (2018), not all parents can afford their children’s education, leading some children to support themselves while studying. Hence, children becoming their family’s breadwinners while studying as a result of financial problems, affecting both their educational aspirations and their lives (Pregoner, Accion, Buraquit, & Amoguis, 2020).

In contrast, three of the Filipino adults argued that being a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” *has no qualifications* and depends solely on the child’s acceptance and initiative to assume responsibility. This may be attributed to the idea that regardless of a child’s financial capacity to provide for their family’s needs, it comes under their sense of responsibility toward their family.

*Roles of tagapagtaguyod na anak.* The primary role of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak,” according to Filipino adults, is *providing financial support*. It may be through managing the household finances such as paying utility bills and providing daily needs such as food. Furthermore, they take on the role of either fully financing their siblings’ education or collaborating with their parents to financially support their siblings’ educational needs.

Garo-Santiago, Mansukhani, and Resurreccion (2009) identified that children are expected to be the financial providers of the family. They have found that those who are working-out-of-school youth assist their family in paying household expenses.

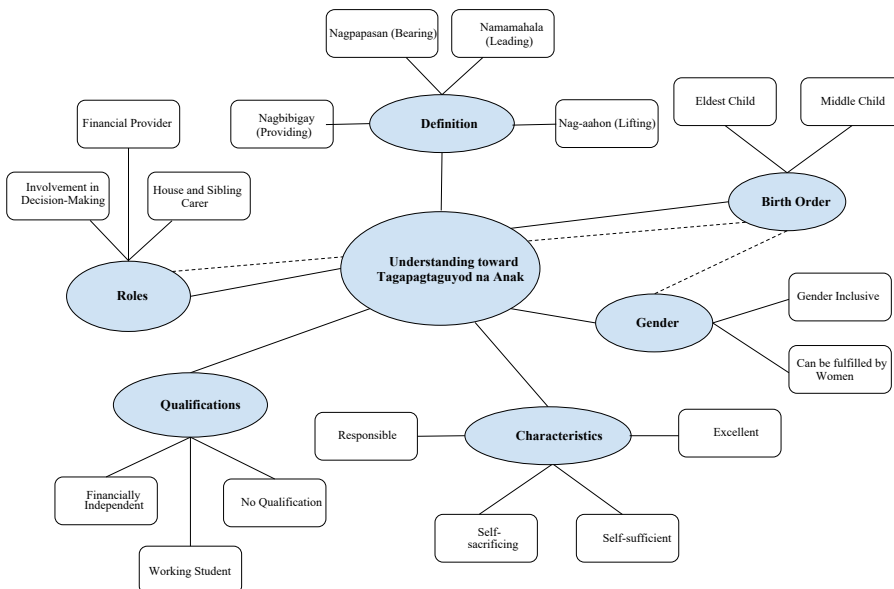
The role of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” extends to being involved with family *decision-making*. Likewise, they may offer advice, grant permission and supervise their family, reflecting the *tagasalo* personality as a mediator within the family. This trait views open communication with parents as a positive aspect and worries that the other siblings are not as forthcoming with their parents (Udarbe, 2001).

A “tagapagtaguyod na anak” also has the role of *managing the household* and taking care of their younger siblings. Their role also extends to assisting their siblings with academic requirements. These responsibilities begin early in life and grow as they enter adulthood and secure employment, reflecting a “tagasalo” personality, characterized by strong responsibility from a young age (Udarbe, 2001). Figure 1 below illustrates the understanding of Filipino adults regarding the concept of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” through the thematic map.

*B. Factors influencing a child to be the family’s tagapagtaguyod*

*Extrinsic factors.* Poverty. The primary factor influencing Filipino children to become the family’s “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is poverty. In a country where 14 million families are economically disadvantaged (Pinlac, 2023), the need for financial support is prevalent. Filipino children often take on this role to meet their family’s expectations, driven by their economic situation to provide practical and financial support (Fulgini, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Garo-Santiago et al., 2009). Thus, poverty significantly contributes to the emergence of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” in Filipino households, motivating them to improve their family’s standard of living.

Change in family structure. A child may take on the role of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” due to changes in the family structure such as parental separation, parent loss or growing up in a broken home. In addition, when there are younger siblings involved, there exists a



Source(s): Figure by authors

Figure 1. Thematic map of Filipino adults’ understanding of the tagapagtaguyod na anak

phenomenon known as “parentification,” where a child feels compelled to take on responsibilities for family affairs and consistently assumes the role of protecting the family during difficult times (Cho & Lee, 2018). The responsibility often falls on the child since parents might not be able to fulfill it.

Parental incapacity. Parental incapacity, such as aging, illness or job loss, is another key factor driving children to become “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” This perspective has been substantiated by Dalmacio *et al.* (2022), who determined that parental deaths, incapacities, illnesses and even a lack of social security are factors that influence children’s participation in the workforce. It conveys how children end up supporting their families when parents are unable to maintain their function as the primary providers of the family (Sacristan, 2014). Consequently, the absence of a primary earner prompts the emergence of a new financial support source within the family.

Parental expectations. The majority of the single adult Filipino children understand that a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is highly influenced by their parent’s expectations to help the family. This is consistent with Udarbe’s (2001) claim that parental expectations and behavior have a significant impact on a child’s ability to be a *tagasalo*. This indicates that Filipino families engage in deliberate socialization, openly teaching norms, values, appropriate behavior, social duties and family expectations (Medina, 2001).

*Intrinsic factors.* Volition. Contrary to the perspective of single adult Filipino children, middle-aged parents contend that being a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” of the family is a child’s volition rather than an obligation. Children choose to help the family on their own, driven by their initiative and willingness. It supports Frith’s (2013) idea that when people engage in volitional behavior, they feel a high sense of agency. Because a voluntary act begins based on the present demands and goals (Haggard, 2019), it suggests that children could initiate or decide to assume the position of “tagapagtaguyod na anak.”

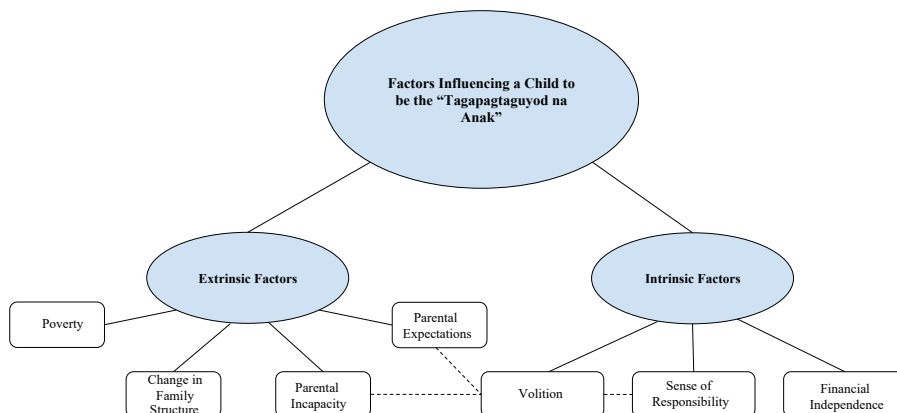
Sense of responsibility. Some Filipino parents believe that a child’s sense of responsibility motivates them to assume the role of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” within the family. For them, a child who lacks maturity and a desire to support the family would not genuinely take on this role. This is supported by Escarises and Jimenez (2018), who found that older single women breadwinners generally had a positive attitude towards their roles, as they could focus on improving their family’s quality of life. This indicates that similar to a “tagasalo” child, a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is often driven by a strong sense of responsibility to their family.

Financial independence. Financial independence enables a child to assume this role, which is similar to one of the qualifications of a “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” Financial independence positively correlates with an individual’s economic circumstances, including their earnings, assets, employment position and level of education (Xiao, Chatterjee, & Kim, 2014). Consequently, it is reasonable to agree with Filipino adults who argue that a child cannot qualify as “tagapagtaguyod na anak” if they lack the financial capacity to sustain themselves and their family. As illustrated in Figure 2, the factors influencing a child to become a “tagapagtaguyod na anak” are presented.

### *C. Perspectives and feelings of Filipino adults on the phenomena of “tagapagtaguyod na anak”*

Most single adult Filipino children view the phenomenon of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” negatively, seeing it as unjust due to the excessive pressure and expectations placed on them. Despite this, they understand its inevitability because of their family’s needs and economic situation. As reflected by the findings of Dalmacio *et al.* (2022), children in today’s society have to deal with the realities of life, some of which prevent them from choosing their working age.

Consequently, single adult Filipino children believe that these expectations are troubling to the mental health of the “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” One of the challenges faced by breadwinners is emotional instability. Maghinay, Rio, and Pagaran (2014) found that feelings



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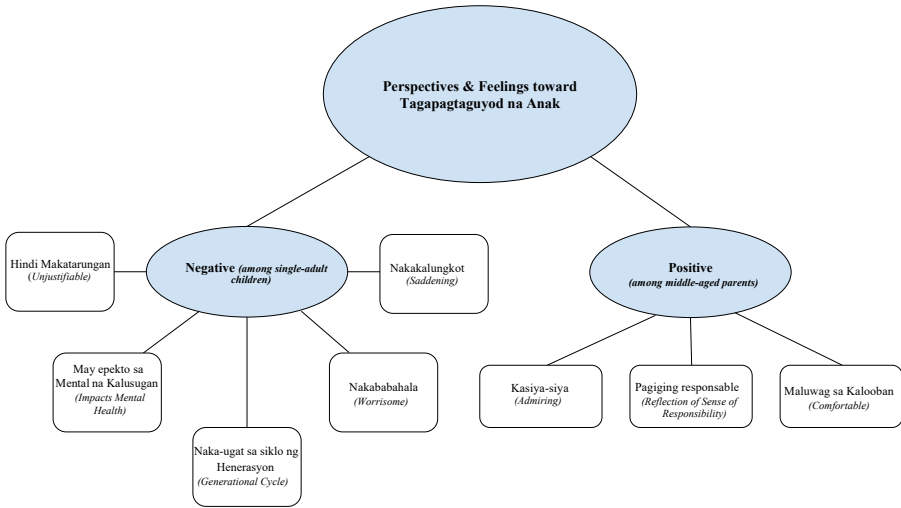
**Figure 2.** Thematic map for the factors influencing a child to be the tagapagtaguyod of the family

of stress, pressure and anxiety arise from Filipina breadwinners, who worry about managing and providing for their family’s needs and feel pressured by their desire to pay back their parents. Single adult children’s negative perception of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” leads to negative feelings consisting of sadness and worry. Macaranas and Macaranas (2017) found that breadwinners often dismiss their feelings with the phrase, “*Okay lang, para sa pamilya,*” to prioritize family needs. These children also feel sadness, believing that financial responsibility should not solely fall on them but on the entire family. This perception supports the view of a middle-aged parent who sees the phenomenon as part of a generational cycle, where parents expect support from their children, who then may pass this burden to their own offspring. This demonstrates how intergenerational transmission operates within a family, where beliefs, concepts and actions that may place individuals in difficult situations are passed down across generations (Liem, 2021). This cycle in Filipino families, called the “sandwich generation,” involves extended families with multiple generations where nuclear families depend on each other (Miller, 1981, as cited in Tongson, 2018).

On the positive side, middle-aged parents perceived this phenomenon as a reflection of a child’s sense of responsibility. For parents, having a child who is willing to help the family gives them a sense of fulfillment. This illustrates how parents mold the idea of a “good child,” where a child is obedient and demonstrates love and care for their family (Dela Cruz, Protacio, Balanon, Yacat, & Francisco, 2001). However, middle-aged parents emphasized that children should not lose their sense of self while fulfilling these responsibilities. Neglecting their own identity can alter how they perceive themselves in the future, impacting their ability to balance caring for themselves with caring for others (Fulcher & Coyle, 2011). Figure 3 illustrates the contrasting perspectives on “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” Single adult children generally view the phenomenon negatively, while middle-aged parents perceive it more positively. This divergence may be influenced by generational differences, age, familial background and upbringing.

#### D. Roots from Filipino values

Filipino adults believe that the concept of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is deeply rooted in the Filipino value of *family-orientedness*. In Filipino culture, the closely-knit nature of families creates an obligation for family members to support each other. The parents and the child are a “kapwa” to one another and “hindi sila iba sa iba” (Enriquez, 1977). Children should prioritize their families, as their relationship is not only connected biologically or by being



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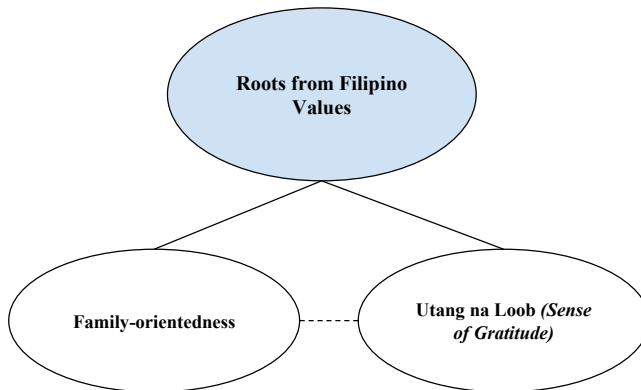
**Figure 3.** Thematic map illustrating the different perspectives of Filipino adults on the tagapagtaguyod na anak phenomenon

“magka-dugo” but also connected culturally (Clemente, 2017). A child’s self-perception and sense of family obligations are influenced by this family-centeredness. This connection forms the basis of the “utang na loob” between Filipino parents and children.

A child’s sense of gratitude (*utang na loob*) often motivates them to repay their parents’ sacrifices. Kaut (1961) translated *utang na loob* as “debt of gratitude”; however, Enriquez (1977) argued that, within Filipino culture, it is more accurately understood as “gratitude/solidarity.” This concept should not be seen as a burden or “debt,” but rather as an opportunity to repay favors. Considering that the Filipino family is described as structurally nuclear, functionally extended, and places a strong importance on reciprocity (Go, 1994). Once parents have met their children’s basic needs, the responsibility shifts to the children to care for their elderly parents (Tarroja, 2010). This aligns with Dancel (2005) that gratitude is a core value in Filipino society and a key element of “kagandahang-loob” (an inner sense of desire to do good). Because of this, demonstrating an unappreciative behavior may be referred to as “walang utang na loob.” These might indicate that *utang na loob* toward their parents drives them to assist and support the family, exhibiting their *kagandahang-loob* and *pagtanaw ng utang na loob* (sense of gratitude). Though not explicitly stated or imposed by parents, “*utang na loob*” reflects a deep, reciprocal relationship between parents and children. Figure 4 illustrates how the roots of Filipino values associated with “tagapagtaguyod na anak” are interconnected.

### Implications and recommendations

The lack of research on the phenomenon of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” prompted this study to explore its meaning through the perspectives of Filipino single adult children and middle-aged parents. Udarbe’s (2001) *tagasalo* personality framework was incorporated to identify similarities and differences with the characteristics of “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” The findings revealed that “tagapagtaguyod na anak” exists in Filipino families. It is significant to emphasize that the distinction between the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” and the “tagasalo” children is their duty to their families. Their primary role centers on being the family’s financial provider and functioning as the family’s main support system. While *tagasalo* focuses more on the emotional assistance that a child can provide to the family, the



Source(s): Figure by authors

Figure 4. Thematic map on the roots of Tagapagtaguyod na Anak from the Filipino values

*tagapagtaguyod na anak* is more likely to be seen favorably. However, in *tagasalo*, as Udarbe claimed, owing to the capacity for emotional distance of the *tagasalo*, they are negatively viewed due to being misunderstood and a tendency to distance themselves as a defense mechanism. In contrast to *tagapagtaguyod na anak*, when they can maintain emotional distance, they are seen as strong and motivating since they can manage situations on their own. Further, Carandang’s claim implies that *tagasalo* people are unrecognized, whereas Udarbe’s viewpoint implies that *tagasalo* might not feel unloved. Instead, they could experience dependency and a lack of appreciation because of the weight of their obligations. This weight of their responsibility is similar to how Filipino adults negatively perceive the existence of *tagapagtaguyod na anak* in the family. Although these children are highly regarded, parents tend to overlook their needs. As a result, these children may become depressed, worried, apprehensive or lose their sense of self.

The “tagapagtaguyod na anak” and “tagasalo” share several similarities, including traits like a strong sense of responsibility, conflict mediation and the ability to maintain emotional distance. Both roles involve a desire for harmony and control, with parents seen as central figures in their lives. Filipino values such as family orientation and “*utang na loob*” (debt of gratitude) underpin the “tagapagtaguyod na anak,” while the “tagasalo” is more associated with personality traits. The “tagapagtaguyod na anak” is viewed as a role shaped by personal and societal factors, often with potential mental health impacts, whereas the “tagasalo” is seen as a personality type driven by a need for control.

One of the study’s limitations is the predominance of female participants, which may have influenced perceptions about the gender of a “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” Future research should aim for a balanced gender representation to better understand these perceptions. Despite this, the study found that participants did not view the role as specific to one gender. Although male participants felt that females were more likely to assume this role, the study acknowledges that it did not fully capture perspectives from both genders. Future research should focus on the lived experiences of Filipino adults in the “tagapagtaguyod na anak” role, including the psychological impact and role limitations. Comparative studies with similar roles in other cultures could illuminate unique aspects of the Filipino experience. Researchers should also explore how cultural norms and intergenerational responsibilities shape parent-child relationships, financial obligations and constraints. Educating families on financial literacy and redefining parental duties may improve understanding and balance within the family. Additionally, mental health professionals should develop support services to address the concerns of both “tagapagtaguyod na anak” and their parents.

All these observations suggest that the role of “tagapagtaguyod na anak” in Filipino households is deeply connected to familial obligations as well as economic and social factors that significantly influence a child’s decision to assume such responsibilities. This role is not only expected of family members but also follows a generational cycle, reflecting its persistence amid changing socioeconomic conditions. Given its close ties to societal expectations and financial pressures, policymakers should allocate resources and support to families who rely on a “tagapagtaguyod na anak.” Indeed, family relationships and obligations hold considerable value in Filipino society.

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