

# “Lived Experiences of Houseparents in a Residential Care Facility: A Phenomenological Study”

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## ABSTRACT

Houseparents provide essential daily care, emotional support, and stability to children separated from families in Philippine residential care facilities. Their multifaceted role—combining parental guidance, advocacy, and trauma-informed care—directly shapes children's psychosocial development and the well-being of children in these institutional centers. While existing literature often focuses on the challenges of residential care, the internal meaning-making processes and self-determination of houseparents in the Philippine context are rarely explored. This phenomenological research explored the lived experiences of five seasoned houseparents in a Residential Care Facility in Bukidnon, Philippines, focusing on emotional labor demands, institutional support, satisfaction of psychological needs, and meaning-making processes, examined through Self-Determination Theory and Logotherapy. Purposive sampling was used, data gathered through three semi-structured interviews per participant (60-90 minutes each) guided by Seidman's three interview protocol. The data analysis was performed through the use of Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological approach and HyperRESEARCH software, with member checking, reflexivity, and ethical compliance applied to ensure trustworthiness. The findings revealed four themes: (1) “Biological, Social, Spiritual Adaptation”, reflecting how houseparents adjust to their demanding job. (2) “Rewards Of Caregiving”, highlighting the emotional benefits and sense of purpose; (3) “Sustaining Well-being Practice”, describing coping mechanisms and institutional supports that prevent burnout; and (4) “Transformation” wherein houseparents come to see their work not merely as a job but as a ministry, where caring becomes an expression of compassion, and service to a higher purpose, often rooted in faith. Recommendations of the study include specific resiliency training, improved institutional support policies, and culturally competent interventions in order to decrease burnout and improve the quality of care.

**Keywords:** houseparents, phenomenology, caregiver well-being, lived experiences

## INTRODUCTION

*"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."*

(James 1:27)

This bible verse in James finds its place perfectly in the context of caregiving as it stresses the role of giving help to those who are weak and in need. Caregivers experience emotional exhaustion and institutional dissatisfaction in residential care, giving attention to the children they care for. Some people blame their emotional tiredness and dissatisfaction (which are often disregarded emotions) for the poor support of the institutions they work for. Although they are crucial, caregivers' experiences are poorly understood, in particular, in the context of the Philippines. To fill the existing knowledge gap, Social Workers need to play a vital role. It concerns itself with the health and welfare of people and communities, especially those that are poor and marginalized. The objectives of social work-respect for human dignity, empowerment, and advocacy-accord well with the research that examines the lived experiences of houseparents in residential care facilities. Such an understanding will help social workers in improving the quality of care given to children in residential care, activate support networks that are more responsive to their needs, and refine culturally responsive interventions.

The intrinsic contribution of the present study is directly towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), more so, touches on the mental and emotional well-being of caregivers, which is very important for delivering quality care to the vulnerable group of children. In addition, the present study responds to Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by pinpointing the needs of marginalized children and their caregivers, thus striving to produce a more equal and supportive environment.

This phenomenological study of the lived experience of houseparents in a residential care facility was conducted. This work sought to contribute towards a better design of supportive work environments and policies that care for caregivers, that is, for their well-being.

## Background of the Study

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2022, economic hardship, family breakdown, and social exclusion have led to rising child abandonment in the Philippines. In Roche's work (2020), abandonment meant loss of emotional and psychological support from parents and caregivers for affected children; thus, organized care environments that function as homes are created, such as that of the residential care facility in Bukidnon, which serves abandoned, neglected, abused, and orphaned children from disadvantaged communities.

*Houseparents* or the surrogate parents in residential care who oversee children's physical, social, and emotional development (DSWD guidelines) are of critical importance to child development, delivering primary medical care and an emotionally supportive context which has been demonstrably critical to the development of resilience and psychological well-being (Chimange Bond, 2020; Morais et al., 2023). However, this position requires a high level of emotional labor, which can be described as the effort to regulate emotions and show forms of organizationally desired expressions in the course of interpersonal interaction (Hochschild, 1983), especially when forming secure attachments consistent, responsive caregiving that promotes trust and emotional regulation in traumatized children (Adland et al., 2021; Babo et al., 2023).

Emotional labor affects caregivers' health and job satisfaction, creating a compromise between preservation of professional boundaries versus provision of an emotional support driven by attachment, often leading to burnout (Nonnis et al., 2022; Carvalho et al., 2022; Ducharme et al., 2007). At the TP residential facility, houseparents (some belong to ethnic groups, mainly the Higaunon tribe) who work long-term at the facility tend to engage in verbal abuse toward their colleagues, contributing to high newer staff turnover within two (2) years. (Leiter, 2015; Adland et al., 2021)

The phenomenological research inquiry explores the lived experiences of houseparents, non-conceptualized, subjective phenomena that they face in their day-to-day lives to understand challenges, rewards, well-being practices, and meaning-making at TP Residential Care Facility (Bosmans et al., 2012; Babo et al., 2023). The findings will be used to inform culturally sensitive policies that will increase caregiver retention and quality of relational care to achieve better child outcomes.

## Theoretical Perspective

This study employs Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) and Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959). SDT explicates "Sustaining Well-Being Practices" through relatedness (gentle communication), competence (turnover protocols), and autonomy (coping strategies). Logotherapy elucidates "Transformation" through participants' construction of caregiving as "kani nga ministry nga gihatag sa Ginoo" ("ministry given by God"). Ecological Systems and Emotional Labor perspectives contextualize these primary frameworks.

## Statement of the Problem

The caregivers in residential care facility particularly underwent some stress and misery that may cause physical and emotional stress in themselves; however, their concerns and frame of reference is seldom discussed in the literature (Kilmer et al., 2024). The impact of caregiver's studies on the Philippine residential care institutions, how they cope with the emotional dynamics on an individual level, are underreported (Bagwell-Gray et al., 2023; Hoover et al., 2022). These exchanges are crucial to understand since caregivers are likely to suffer a lot of

emotional distress and this results in burnout and low job satisfaction (Houts et al., 2008). Specifically, the turnover occurs within 5 years of service down to three months. Most of these houseparents have families of their own and little children who are left with their relatives back home as the houseparents go out to work. Certain observations indicate that the productivity of new incumbents is high and expresses good relationship among the work colleagues but as time goes by, some character problems are exhibited. This involves various unacceptable behavior of a superior nature, as demonstrated by screaming at the new recruits and an urge to get three social workers and houseparents to quit. This tendency has been observed despite a great number of warnings, which finally resulted in the firing of this person. These problems result in the working environment being disrupted, the increase of stress, low staff morale, and deterioration of the quality of care. This study is meant to bridge the gap between the demands and support that the caregivers were getting in the Philippine residential care facilities.

The study aimed to determine, based on the lived experiences of the caregivers, certain challenges, requirements, and ways of improvement. Such information is applied in developing specific training interventions, allowing supportive policies, and increasing awareness and support to caregivers. The current research is conducted to enhance the quality of life of the caregivers and residents. The inability to address the experiences of caregivers may also lead to a gap in the support system that is required to address caregiver mental health (Berk et al., 2018). Of particular interest was the discussion of the challenges to the improvement of the training of the caregiver towards emotional resilience and active care strategies as it will result in improved performance of the caregiver, reduction of burnout, and improvement of the dynamics between the caregiver and the residents (Carvalho et al., 2022; Ramsli et al., 2022).

In this regard, the narrative analysis of the interactions of caregivers is intended to fill the gap in knowledge by determining particular elements that require reinforcement and enhancement with regard to improving the well-being of caregivers (Olson, 2023). This paper sought to learn more about the lived experiences of the caretakers so as to find out what kind of training and assistance that they require in the more appropriate practice of caregiving. The present research would therefore add to the information on the experiences of those who provide care and consequently assist in formulating policies and practices that would elevate the environment in which care is delivered. (Carvalho et al., 2022).

## Research Questions

This research paper described the lived experiences of caregivers in a Residential Care Facility. Particularly, this study addressed the following questions:

1. How do houseparents in residential care facility in Bukidnon describe their experience of caring for the children?
2. How do they maintain their well-being while serving in the residential care facility?
3. How do houseparents in a residential care facility find purpose and fulfillment in their work?

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of houseparents within residential care facilities. Specifically, this study explored the essence of their experiences related to caregiving challenges, perceived rewards, the emotional labor demands, well-being practices, and the meaning-making process framed through Ecological System Theory, Emotional Labor Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Logotherapy.

## Significance of the Study

This study was significant as it examined the lived experiences of caregivers at the TP Residential Care Facility. This study enhanced comprehension of the factors influencing caregivers' mental health, work satisfaction, and their attitude to duties and obligations. This study was particularly timely for the following recipients:

**Caregivers in Residential Care Facilities.** Caregivers are presented as critical in this study, as their emotional and psychological dimension is responsible for resilience and satisfaction. Outcomes of exploring the nuances of their experience inform strategies to better equip caregivers to build and sustain strong bonds with the children they are looking after. On the basis of this comprehension, caregivers can be enabled to do better providing effective and supportive care, but are also set on a path for positive emotions and personal development.

**Policymakers and Residential Care Facility Administrators.** For administrators and lawmakers, this work would provide valuable insights into the fundamental dynamics that are driving quality of care in residential care. The study focuses on the factors which contribute to the life and care relationships care-givers have with their wards, and proposes evidence-based recommendations for how the characteristics of institutional and other policies, support structures, and training and development of care-givers might best be reformed. As a result of the present findings, rules, and procedures, there may also evolve improved child and caregiver care, and a happier, healthier care environment.

**Students.** There's plenty of information for caregivers to take into account when variable caregiving roles in residential settings. The lived experiences of caregivers are at the heart of this work, and with careful orientation, they may reveal social work practice and related fields' core knowledge. By this, students may design research projects, theses, or dissertations relative to caregiver well-being and based on child welfare.

**Social Work Practitioners and Professionals.** This is particularly relevant to the field and practitioners of Social Work as such a study is needed. Future intervention and support systems would greatly benefit from understanding the immediate challenges that houseparent's encounter. Social workers may utilize this research in shaping stronger arguments for better working conditions, more rigorous training, and supportive resources for caregivers' well-being. The study aligns well with the specific values of social work regarding emotion and the psychological dimensions of caregiving: empathy, understanding, and holistic support. The training background provides a much-needed resource that now can be utilized by social work professionals seeking to advance their practice for the benefit of children and caregivers in residential care settings.

## Definition of Terms

To facilitate the understanding of this study, different terms are operationally defined herein.

**Attachment.** This term refers to the emotional bond between the child and their primary caregiver(s), characterized by behaviors that maintain proximity to the attachment figure for protection, comfort, and security.

**Caregivers or houseparents.** This term refers to the individuals who are accountable for supporting and giving care 24/7 to the children that reside at the Residential Care Facility.

**Institutional Support.** This term refers to methods, procedures, and resources (which include trainings, retreats, stress debriefing and other mental health related activities) provided by the institution to support caregivers in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

**Lived Experiences.** Refers to the difficult and complicated nature of caregiving as well as rewards in caregiving.

**Residential Care Facility.** This pertains to a meticulously organized setting designed to provide support and housing for children lacking parental guardianship 24 hours 7 days a week or 24/7.

**Relatedness.** The basic psychological need to experience warm, close relationships that foster belongingness and mutual understanding (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

**Competence.** This means feeling effective in one's ongoing interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities for mastery (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

**Autonomy.** Refers to the inherent psychological necessity for volitional action, perceiving one's conduct as self-affirmed and derived from one's cohesive ideals, rather than influenced by external constraints (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

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## Organization of the Study

This study examined the houseparents in a residential care institution. Chapter 1 defines the grounds with the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, theoretical frameworks and research questions, significance of the study, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 provides an extensive literature review of the topics of caregiving dynamics, lived experiences of caregivers, and the correspondence to the perspectives of the RVM pedagogy and the topic of the research agenda in the graduate school. Chapter 3 describes the methodology, such as the transcendental phenomenology design based on the seven-step design of Colaizzi, the research context of the TP facility, purposive sampling of the participants, the collection of data through semi-structured interviews, the use of HyperRESEARCH to analyze the data, the trustworthiness measures, the reflexivity of the researcher, and the ethical consideration. Chapter 4 provides the results including profiles of participants, four main themes (Challenges in Caregiving, Rewards of caregiving maintaining well-being practices, and meaningful service engagement), exhaustive descriptions, coded extracts, and theoretical connections. Chapter 5 concludes, gives recommendations to caregivers, policymakers and social workers based on the themes and frameworks, actionable recommendations based on the themes and frameworks, and the focus on the ethical data handling and cultural sensitivity in all.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature and studies relevant to the conceptualization and significance of this work.

### Caregiving

Caregivers of residents in long-term care facilities have responsibility for many things that have immediate effects on the lives of the residents. Caregivers are responsible for preventing errors and ensuring that residents are following their plans of treatment (Kuehn, 2022). Because attachments can develop strong relationships that can overcome a feeling of belonging and loneliness and hopelessness, emotional support is an essential component of care (McGarry Feeney, 2023). Consistent with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2020), caregivers speak up for residents, and they seek guidance from physicians and relatives to plan care, and also to deal with questions that may arise.

These responsibilities require caregivers to be flexible and to have information about all types of health concerns because, at most times, they will face different needs from the residents they serve (National Institute on Aging, 2021). This is also a consequence of the broad range of tasks that caregivers will have to undertake in order to be able to establish a supportive and nurturing environment for the residents in residential care homes. The understanding of the complexity of tasks is a significant step to provide residential care staff with their especially specific needs" (Dudman et al., 2019). This associates with interpretation of underlying causes of issues and informed decision making; in the case of child caregivers in Philippine residential homes, this is likened to placing the priority of child welfare above the uncertain needs, investigating the behavioral antecedents, and managing resource shortages to balance the professional-emotional needs.

Attachment between the care giver and the child is dynamic. Because of the difficulties surrounding the relationships of carers and children living in residential places, the attachment theory of the works of John Bowlby adds to the problems as it emphasizes the importance of constant attachment figures in the emotional and mental development of children (Bowlby, 1969). This is a two-fold task of houseparents to balance the high priority of immediate welfare to the level of secure attachments. The recent researches indicate cultural adjustments of non-Western settings such as the Philippines, where alloparenting and collectivist ideals redefine the patterns of attachment (Schmidt et al., 2021).

### Challenges and Well-being in Caregiving

Caregivers tend to experience emotional exhaustion and burnout due to the heavy and hard work experiences in the provision of care (e.g., medication management, financial issues, and the living circumstances of the care recipients) (Carvalho et al., 2022). According to Harris et al. (2023), Caregivers may experience mental distress (e.g., anxiety and hopelessness) if they are left unsupported and/or overworked. However, it is crucial to have a

complete understanding of these culturally mediated transactions in order to effectively cope with caregiver burden, as culture has a strong impact on the caregiver experience (Dilworth-Anderson et al., 2002).

Harris et al. (2023) found that despite all the challenges, caregivers experience very high levels of work satisfaction. A deeper connection and involvement with the cared for is one of the emotional benefits of being a carer (Carvalho et al., 2022). The environmental context of caregiving in the residential setting has been a prominent area of recent research. Support to the implication that social capital, leadership and culture are mediators of the empowerment health professionals and Care Assistants (at work) Psychology Chamberlain et al. (2024). Best practice and care delivery are related strongly to the supportive work environment, which is a significant predictor of caregiver job satisfaction.

Nonetheless, type of setting to work in, resources available and the quality of interprofessional work-relations might have an important impact on the well-being of carers at a broader level (Kumpikaitė-Valiūnienė et al., 2021). Moreover, a survey conducted by Yeh (2024) on 193 Taiwanese childcare centers showed that poor hygiene, safety, and sustainable facilities contribute to the increased workload and poor quality of care delivered by caregivers. Healthier environments need evidence-based designs, and infrastructure issues in Philippine residential care are no exception. In addition, the unit-level context cross-sectional study indicated that the availability of structural resources and the perception of time slack played a significant role in enhancing the quality of care provided by the care aides, which showed the critical role of the supportive work setting (BMC Health Services Research, 2023). The findings show that the organizational context in residential care institutions needs to be improved to enhance better resident experience and quality of life for the care recipients.

Exercise, socialization, and mindfulness are self-care practices, which have been shown to affect and improve these states and promote caregivers' well-being (Hammersmith Lin, 2019; Birnie et al., 2021). The usefulness is underscored by the success of mindfulness-based interventions in alleviating caregiver distress and achieving a positive mental health outcome (Barlow et al., 2022). In this regard, by prioritizing their own well-being, caregivers are better positioned to cope with the physical and psychological burden of their roles.

### **Cultural and Institutional Implication**

The importance of the stable representation's figures in relation to the emotional and mental development of the child is underscored by the concept. Recent studies have shown the importance of considering cultural variations in the theory of attachment to ensure that it is applicable in many settings of caregiving (Schmidt et al., 2021). This literature review will focus on the implications of cultural variations and the important role to be played by the residential care professionals. Analysis of cultural settings indicates that the patterns of caregiving observable across the world require a redefinition and focus to be more specific.

Although many of the core concepts embedded in attachment theory continue to be confirmed, for example, in the context of urban settings, models taking into account specific cultural factors are increasingly recognized as being applicable to the caregiving networks of rural settings (Schmidt et al., 2021; Fourment et al., 2022). For example, Latin America provides an aspect of the societal context that affects caregiving, with alloparenting-the delegation of part of the caregiving workload to non-parental individuals-calling into question the findings from Western attachment work (Papageorgiou et al., 2014). This represents an illustration of re-allocation of caregiving among social others, along with a broadening of the traditional definition of primary attachment partners.

Caregivers operating in residential settings face special challenges in creating caring and emotionally healthy environments for children. Caregivers face a lot of complex relational dynamics when trying to form secure attachments. These challenges get even more complicated because of cultural and institutional factors. Looking at attachment from different cultural angles not only helps us understand how this attachment patterns work around the world but also highlights why it is important to include a variety of cultural viewpoints in attachment research (Schmidt et al., 2021; Patagia Bakaraki et al., 2024).

This study created the institutional processes through which the relationship complications faced by Filipino houseparents can be explained by Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al. (2021), who showed the role of caregiving

environments in job satisfaction and professional growth in residential facilities. This environmental ambit converts cross-cultural attachment imperatives of Schmidt et al. (2021) with Rocha and Arcinas (2020) Philippine CNSP overload realities. The results of these culturally sampled studies have immediate implication, first and foremost, in the application of Eurocentric theory of attachment in the child protection sector. Choate and Tortorelli (2022) pointed out the risk that the immediate attention to western care models might pose to that of Indigenous children, including the possibility, in the pursuit of western standards, to undermine culture maintenance. That is, it is a pertinent and fitting critical evaluation of the application of attachment theory in the psychotherapeutic setting, with due caution and cultural sensitivity.

### **Support System and Institutional Role**

Institutional support is one of the most important elements in the improvement of the performance of caregivers, particularly in cases where they undergo sudden change, such as in the current epidemic period (for example, the Covid-19 outbreak). Such support systems could potentially be of the highest significance in residential care settings, where caregivers are often faced with high levels of stress and deep-seated emotional issues. The Philippine experience emphasizes the need for institutionalized and socialized support in the health of caregivers. The trust that was developed by Piosang and Grimes (2022) is the level of trust that the religious lay people have in the public institution with regard to the subjective well-being of caregivers as well as the level of trust that the institution has on enhancing the life of caregivers.

On the same note, Rocha and Arcinas (2020) also established that caregivers of children under special protection often experience overload and emotional stress, which consequently affects their quality of life negatively. This is an indication that there is a need to develop a multidisciplinary approach to caregivers that is tailored to their special needs. The issue of wellness of caregivers in the Philippines is better illustrated in the nature of transnational families. It should be mentioned that the marital support was not found to be an important predictor, which can be viewed as the sign of the intricacy of social and institutional support in the contemporary culture. This requires a law that can enhance the quality of life of caregivers especially where there are complicated family dynamics but also capitalize on the power of institutions and social networks.

The findings of this study illustrate the importance of the interplay between the caregivers' own perceptions of their quality of life, the role of institutions, and social connections. To be effective, policy interventions must be viewed as the complex and the heterogeneous reality of caring experiences and that of the cares caregivers. As a prediction, the future work of studies should investigate how to establish institutional enabling structures for caregivers, with a special emphasis on cultural and socioeconomic factors that shape the experiences of caregivers.

### **Vocational Journeys**

Miranda et al. (2025) have determined job realities and vocation paths of Filipino houseparents but require further investigation of meaning-making processes under institutional restrictions. This phenomenological research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how the Bukidnon houseparents manage 24/7 emotional overload using the spiritual resources of logotherapy and SDT well-being pathways, which eventually improves the quality of care. RA 11965 (2023) requires residential caregivers to receive minimum wages/SSS coverage, but the gaps in the policy implementation perpetuate the institutional pressure-P11,000 MOA salaries are not sufficient in the 24/7 position.

Li and Peng (2022) identified spiritual reframing and social support as the major methods of Chinese houseparents to deal with residential care demands, but problem-focused strategies are restricted by institutional conditions, which is similar to the environmental conditions of Miranda et al. (2025), but they introduce mechanisms of coping that are not presented in the Philippine literature. As determined by Dombestein et al. (2020), SDT psychological needs are predictors of autonomous caregiver motivation and well-being in residential care with relatedness, competence, and autonomy satisfaction identified as key mediators. The present theoretical basis directly underlies the phenomenological inquiry of the meaning-making of Filipino houseparents in the context of DSWD by furthering the spiritual reframing proposed by Li and Peng (2022) with the inclusion of SDT.

Although Miranda et al. (2025) defined the 24/7 overload of Filipino houseparents, residential houseparents in Thompson and Daly (2021) found that houseparents gain significant rewards through the observation of child transformation and the development of family-like relationships with children. Lawson and Quinn (2023) confirmed 'making a difference' as the primary reward despite institutional strain. Meaningfulness was identified as the most significant predictor of engagement among human service workers by Esaki and Liu (2023), and the mediation of spiritual calling accounted 62% of the variance of service commitment amidst the risk of burnout. This is a direct confirmation of the Personal Vocation Journeys of Miranda et al. (2025) among Filipino houseparents and empirically grounds the meaning-making attitudinal aspect of logotherapy (Frankl, 1984) on occupational realities. Esaki and Liu (2023) discovered that 62 percent of service commitment variance in human service workers is mediated by spiritual calling. This has been confirmed by Garcia et al. (2025) in the case of Filipino houseparents, who cited sense of calling, maintained through faith and teamwork, as the major asset of resilience during resource shortage, which is the direct extension of Miranda et al. (2025) Personal Vocation Journeys. This empirically bases the meaning making of attitudinal meaning of logotherapy to Philippine residential care.

### **Communication and Emotional Complexity**

Phenomenological research provides important insights into the lived experience of carers. Recent research has explored the complex behavior of carers in different cultural societies and has given particular attention to carers and families with whom separation is a cause of suffering. Even though the general non-verbal communication is relevant to effective caregiving (Williams et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2022), the use of formal manual signing by professional caregivers is not insignificant, particularly in inclusive contexts. The performed study by Schuler and Feller in 2023 has revealed the effectiveness of sign-supported speech of teachers regarding the improvement of communication and acquisition of vocabulary by hearing children aged 2-6 years in the inclusive daycare centers. The research indicated a greater rate of acquisition of high-iconicity signs and an increased rate of acquisition in the older children after six months of exposure. This implies the need to have specialized sign language training of houseparents so that they can provide a more conducive communication environment to children who can take advantage of the tools of non-verbal communication. Residential caregivers are in deep emotional complexities of both devotion and fatigue, which form bittersweet attachment that support and destroy well-being (Caputo, 2021; Rovner and Casten, 2023). It is the emotional ambiguity of these feelings of love with resentment, fulfillment, and burnout that are expressed in the simultaneous negative/positive presence during the daily care process, especially when building relationships with traumatized children (Carvalho et al., 2022). In contrast to surface-acting compliance, such a profound emotional labor requires genuine performance and keeping professional limits, which can in many cases cause identity dilemmas inherent to the role of a houseparent (Hochschild, 1983; Nonnis et al., 2022).

Rocha and Arcinas (2020) reported the emotional distress caused by overload among special protection caregivers in the Philippine setting, but Harris et al. (2023) reported high satisfaction notwithstanding anxiety, which includes resilience through meaning-making.

Narrative inquiry by Miranda et al. (2025) of six Filipino houseparents in a state-operated residential child facility disclosed that among the victims of disability and hospitalization staff shortage, three key themes were found: first, Personal Vocation Journeys where there is spiritual calling and emotional exhaustion, Second, Weaving Environmental Conditions where there is institutional understaffing and resource scarcity, and third, Occupational Realities where there is 24/7 physical-emotional overload. These results go directly hand in hand with the issue of the multifaceted demands and the conflict of roles of the professional-emotional boundaries of Bukidnon houseparents that necessitate the immediate training and mental health intervention in Philippine CNSP facilities (Miranda, A. J., Gavileno, E. M., Vargas, J. R., and Tutor, B. O., 2025).

### **Alignment to RVM Pedagogical Perspective**

The aim of this study is the aspect of caring for the most vulnerable as well as understanding the role of those in power as the spiritual dimension of human growth and development. The aim is to elaborate the challenges and satisfaction that come with caregiving in a residential care institution, shaped by the Ignatian ethics and the passage in the Bible which calls to care for widows and orphans (James 1:27). This study is aligned with the

Transformative Ignacian Marian Education which aimed to contribute to the integral development of learners. It gives life to one of the pillars of the pedagogy which incorporates social realities in instruction. Specifically, it is concerned of care given to vulnerable children. In particular, the results of Marek and Walulik (2022) are further elaborated in this work by introducing, in both regard to caregiving, a spiritual dimension of the analysis, and providing more insight into the concepts of satisfaction and care quality among the caregivers.

In line with the spirit of Venerable Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, this study aimed to become the epitome of the philosophy of compassion, service and absolute care to the marginalized. Through the lives of caregivers working in a residential care facility as described in this study, its aim is to make a constructive contribution to the evolving discussion around compassionate care and social justice, informed by Venerable Ignacia's legacy.

### **Alignment of the Study to the Graduate School Agenda**

Given the Graduate School Research Agenda, the research topic in this study is social justice, service, and faith in the residential care environment. It examined the issues that have been faced in the course of giving care to the needy children. This study contributes to the areas of concern of the Graduate School which is critical thinking and problem solving. The combination of social work, psychology, and sociology produces insight to work on the intricacy of situations, where caregiving experiences are accompanied by other factors. This study adds value to the Graduate School's mission: provision of data that would guide evidence-based policies and practices towards better achievement in the lives of under-represented communities. The study would thereby make a case on the RVM's commitment to social justice and service delivery.

### **Summary**

Residential care facility caregivers are very important in the physical, mental, spiritual and social needs of the children. Yet, high work interest is one of the main challenges that they have to deal with, resulting in stress and burnout (Carvalho et al., 2022). The quality of the inter-professional team, the resources at hand, and the physical environment are also factors that affect job satisfaction (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021). As a prevention of burnout, caregivers should express self-interest and practice mindfulness with the support of institutions that can assist them with professional development and mental health (Hammersmith Lin, 2019). Additional qualitative research is required to know how the caregivers manage and draw resources to provide better care (Williams et al., 2021). Miranda et al. (2025) have determined job realities and vocation paths of Filipino houseparents but require further investigation of meaning-making processes under institutional restrictions. This phenomenological research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how the Bukidnon houseparents navigate emotional overload using the spiritual resources of logotherapy and SDT well-being pathways, which eventually improves the quality of care.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter gives the research design of the study that was used to understand the lived experience of care providers in residential care facilities. Since the most suitable research design is that to examine the subjectively lived experiences of the caregivers, a phenomenological research design and, more specifically transcendental phenomenology was selected. This chapter also outlines the research situation, the participants to be used, the methods of collecting data, the methods of analysis of data, the credibility of the research, the statement of the reflexivity of the research, and the ethical implications in the research.

### **Research Design**

The approach employed in this research study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a type in which data that are not quantitative (qualitative data) such as words, images and description are collected and evaluated, with the intention of comprehending human experiences and perceptions. The predisposition of this method is the desire to concentrate the attention on the necessity to develop new discriminations and knowledge due to the thorough examination of the very object of analysis (Aspers Corte, 2019). Specifically, it can be useful to research complicated phenomena that are not well understood and thus can enable oneself to discover new knowledge or theories (Taherdoost, 2022).

## Research Context

The research was done in the TP Residential Care Facility, a non-profit organization, is a faith-based, non-profit serving 25 traumatized children (abandoned, abused, orphaned, neglected, trafficking) via Christ-centered holistic care. Houseparents (3–8 years' experience) manage 24/7 polycrisis: simultaneous fevers/cries (microsystem overload), turnover protocols/logbooks (mesosystem support), DSWD-aligned policies (exosystem), amid Higaunon cultural norms (macrosystem). Staff turnover risk (2-year average) underscores emotional labor demands. Its purpose is to offer quality care and love to the children that have been through traumatization and offer them the opportunity to live in a permanent family and a bright future. It aims at having a Christ-based home where the children know that they are loved, cared, secured, and that they are safe and are able to reach their potential in a way that is according to their God-given potential and are able to place each of their children in a family either through foster care or local and intercountry adoption or reunite them with their birth family. Its aims are to establish a comprehensive program in the case management of children and their families, implement numerous psychosocial interventions and activities that can be appropriated to the situation and desired objectives, establish a holistic and therapeutic-based group living/home life program to children, provide them with the opportunities to develop their social competence, moral values, and education, achieve their full developmental potentials, establish the linkages and networks with other national and local agencies to enable them to refer, and to support their activities (TP MOO,2022). It is a facility that provides a systematic environment which will fulfill the physical, emotional and developmental needs of their clients.

The research environment provided a holistic background to the actual experiences of the caregivers and in the process.

## Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sampling method that was used in this study is the purposive sampling, which is designed to identify and attract individuals or participants with certain features and a history, and are capable of providing meaningful and rich data that may relate to the study objectives. Purposeful sampling refers to a type of non-probability sampling that is used in research, especially when it comes to qualitative research (Stratton, 2024).

This approach was used to select the respondents and identify those that meet the inclusion criteria namely:

1. That they have at least two (2) years in a care giving role at the institution.
2. They are presently working in the residential care facility of TP.
3. Have been trained as caregivers/houseparents.

The following conditions are necessary to ensure that the participants could provide useful data to characterize their emotional experience and their relational processes. This study included five (5) participants who took part voluntarily. This selection is made to obtain the saturation of the data to immerse in the complex emotional experiences and the dynamics of relationships that the caregivers of the residential facility experience, and to obtain the entire range of views on the issue that vary in terms of the level of experience and setting caregivers have.

The participants were carefully chosen in order to reflect various perspectives and make the findings as dimensional and broad as possible (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This well-chosen sample of caregivers will include people with different backgrounds, experience, age, and cultural orientation, and ensure an extensive understanding of the experience people undergo when living in the caregiving context.

## Data collection

The data collection was based on Seidman three-interview phenomenological protocol that was used to inquire more deeply the lived experiences of houseparents working in a Bukidnon residential care home. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with five purposive sampled experienced houseparents, with each featuring 60-90 minutes of experimentation; (1) the history of their lives and how they got into caregiving; (2)

what they were doing, what they were struggling with, and what they were facing in the daily life of the house parenting work, the rewards and how do they maintain their well-being; and (3) their meaning-making and outlook. Audio-recorded sessions that were consensually transcribed were organized and preliminarily coded with HyperRESEARCH software. This was a rigorous and iterative method which guaranteed depth of context, authenticity of participant voice and adherence to the principles of phenomenology.

### **Data Collection Method**

The major approach in collecting the data was the in-depth and semi-structured, one-on-one, phenomenological interviews used to investigate the lived experiences of the caregivers in the residential care facility. The method was particularly selected to explore subjective experiences, meaning caregivers ascribe to their roles, the difficulties they face caring for children, the benefits, and the strategies that they use when taking care of children (Doumit, M. et al,2008; Saleh, F.et al, 2018). An open-ended set of questions was employed by the interviewer in order to promote spontaneous and detailed answers, since these questions served the purpose of an elaborate framework that was used to organize the interview, but not a fixed script. Background demographic information was gathered to give the narratives of the participants some contextualization and details about their organizational roles, the number of years they have been giving care, and their reasons (Tamayo Botero, 2017). This demographic data enabled the interrelation analysis between the characteristics, status, and care methodology of caregivers. The interview guide was created, beginning with the explanation of the objectives of the study and the necessity to know what the caregivers experience in the residential care settings. It also created the atmosphere of trust and informality by promising the participants anonymity and the usefulness of their input. The basis of the guide was the specific questions on daily routines, emotional experiences, difficult moments, and perceived needs. To make the interview guide trustworthy and legitimate, it went through the face-validity and content-checking of the professionals in the field of qualitative research and the profession of being a caregiver. One caregiver with attributes close to the target population was subjected to a pilot test to have the questions refined in order to provide clarity and reduce ambiguity, thus increasing the sensitivity of the instrument to elicit high-quality data (Boer et al.,2022). The insights into the daily routine of residents were also informed by the knowledge gained during this pilot phase.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Formal approval for the study was secured from the Director of the residential care facility through a written submission to verify ethical compliance and institutional permission.

Upon approval, five caregivers were purposively recruited to participate in the study, a sample size chosen to capture a rich diversity of caregiving profiles and experiences.

Depending upon the three-interview series model created by Seidman (2013), every participant had three distinct 60 to 90-minute meetings spaced at least three days apart to provide time to reflect. The initial interview was based on the professional background of the participants and their present experience of living as caregivers. The second interview examined the life of caregiving in its day-to-day realities, in particular, how the participants dealt with stress and how their physical and emotional health affected the situation. The third and last session focused on ways in which caregivers can get deeper meaning and fulfillment in their job. All interviews were performed at the counseling room of the facility (quiet and private environment) and audio-recorded with informed consent. These tapes were later verbatim transcribed with the addition of field notes and personal observation to take into consideration the contextual clues and non-verbal communication. To preserve data integrity and concentration, the collection and transcription process was oriented on special perceptions with the deliberate attempt to exclude redundant or repetitive statements of the same actors to enhance the validity and reliability of the results.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative information obtained is examined by the descriptive phenomenological approach of Colaizzi (1978). This approach aimed to uncover and describe the fundamental "essence" of the houseparents' lived experiences within the institutional context of the TP by moving beyond surface descriptions to reveal "hidden

meanings" (Tamayo Botero, 2017). Such an approach is especially applicable in the interpretation of emotional work and the psychological effects of caregiving.

The analysis was done in seven steps as outlined by Colaizzi:

**Familiarization:** Multiple readings of the transcripts of interviews to obtain a complete picture of the lived reality of the houseparents.

**Identifying Significant Statements:** Phrases and sentences that are directly related to the challenges and meaning of caregiving are extracted.

**Formulating Meanings:** This includes the shift between the literal statements and the underlying meanings, based on theoretical perspectives, including Emotional Labor theory.

**Clustering Themes:** Entailing the devised meanings into groups (e.g., Decision Making, Boundaries).

**Developing an Exhaustive Description:** Building the description of the life of a houseparent, combining all the found themes.

**Creation of the Fundamental Structure:** Reducing the exhaustive description to a compact statement that is the "essence" of being a houseparent.

**Member Checking (Validation):** Visiting the houseparents to confirm their descriptions reflect their actual experiences and give the findings a base directly in the original accounts of the participants, and increase the level of trustworthiness. (Doumit, M. et al., 2008).

This methodical approach is designed to furnish a methodical, verifiable response to the subjective voices of the caregivers as opposed to the systemic structures unveiled by the Ecological Systems Theory.

### **Trustworthiness**

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability remained the most important research criteria for building confidence (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen, Elo, 2020). These criteria are deeply rooted in the foundational work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who introduced the concept of trustworthiness as a parallel concept to validity and reliability within qualitative research. In essence, this framework has been a robust bundle of directing opinions on the quality and reliability of qualitative research works. In this study, Credibility is established through straightforward data, transcripts, and results that faithfully represent the experiences of the participants in a true picture form, and the participants are satisfied with the findings and the research paper, offering a reliable depiction of the original data. Transferability is supported by clear descriptions of the research area, the participants, and the data collection tools to enhance the applicability of the study by the readers to other settings and populations (Boer et al, 2022; McGrath et al, 2021). Dependability is strengthened through member checking, in which the participants were invited to comment on and critique the analysis, thereby validating the reliability of the findings. Confirmability is ensured by the researcher's meticulous documentation of each stage of the investigation, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as reflexivity to identify and evaluate personal biases and assumptions, thereby increasing the confirmability and neutrality of the study's findings.

### **Reflexivity Statement**

The researcher has a profound background in child welfare institutions, as she has more than five years of experience working as an officer-in-charge of the TP residential care facility. This has been through a training experience that has developed a sense of caregiver experience in residential care. Answering the participants, the researcher used reflective thinking strategies in the study due to the possible biases associated with the challenges of caregiving. This involves not being involved, but empathetic in the interview process and critical discussion of reflections to make the process objective. The researcher prioritizes anonymization and provides a safe environment for participants to openly share their experiences. This thoughtful and objective approach aimed to give equal weight to participants' utterances without imposing personal thoughts or hopes. Engaging in

reflexivity enhanced the study's credibility. The research will help to optimize practices and reinforce support networks of caregivers, and the researcher adheres to ethically upright research methods, as well as being sensitized to the boundaries of her personal worldview, and attempts to develop an objective view of the experiences of caregivers.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The ethical principles adhered to by the researcher are contained in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The researcher paid attention to three main principles:

**Respect for Persons:** The participants were treated with respect, and they were provided with a detailed description of the purpose of the study, the procedures, risk conditions, and advantages of the study, and then consent was obtained. It was a voluntary process, and the participant was free to pull out of it at any time without repercussions, therefore guaranteeing the autonomy of the participants and the safeguarding of their rights and well-being.

**Beneficence:** The study aimed at reducing the harm and maximizing the potential benefits. The techniques of data gathering were streamlined in such a manner that caused minimal pain.

**Justice:** The sampling of the participants was just and fair. Another aspect that the researcher was eager to remove was the aspect of bias that can affect the validity of the findings in the process of data analysis, and the researcher strived to be objective. The study of caregiver experiences was done using thorough methods in order to make fruitful conclusions and address ethical issues.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** All the information gathered was done discreetly. To maintain the anonymity and meet the appropriate data privacy laws, including the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 20173, 2012), private information was stripped. The findings were reported only in bulky form in order to keep the participants anonymous.

Respecting the ethical standards of institutions, this study applied the tools of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve the linguistic clarity and support the technical processing of qualitative data. In particular, the use of AI involved the paraphrasing of the Review of Related Literature (RRL), verbatim paraphrasing of Cebuano translations to the English language, and the development of the phenomenological interview guide. The full Statement of AI Declaration (including the description of the exact tools, ChatGPT, Quillbot, Perplexity AI, Bohrium, and Gemini), the prompts employed, and the description of the utility of outputs) can be found in the Appendix of this manuscript. The researcher verified all of the outputs of AI assistance and checked them manually so that they could reflect the true voices and experiences of the participants. It is based on these principles that the researcher tried to achieve a comprehensive and ethical research which could lead to a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding the caregiver experiences without violating the rights and the well-being of all the study participants.

### **Summary**

This chapter is a description of the research design of the study of the experiences of caregivers working in residential care facilities in a transcendental phenomenological approach. The qualitative research was performed at the TP residential care facility in Bukidnon, among a group of children who encountered trauma. Semi-structured interviews were held with five caregivers, who were chosen based on their experience in the field, and lasted 60-90 minutes, with the questions being about their everyday experiences and their emotional issues. The analysis of data employed the descriptive phenomenological method of Colaizzi with a cultural inclusion with special attention to the Higaunon. tribe's point of view. To be trustworthy, the study considered the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and addressed the ethical principles presented in the Belmont Report, which provides respect and confidentiality to the participants.

The research added to the knowledge on the experiences of caregivers, and brought a change to practice in the residential care setting by adhering to ethical standards.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings, analysis, and interpretations that have been made from the data that has been collected. By combining the observations with the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, this chapter will offer a rich insight into the phenomena that are being observed. To ensure that the findings remain clear, the data have been presented in a way that is organized around the themes that were identified during the inductive coding process.

### Operational Data Collection

The researcher originally planned to collect data from seven (7) houseparents participants in a residential care facility of TP. However, because of administrative restructuring at the beginning of the study, two (2) participants were separated from their work, leaving the researcher with five (5) qualified participants. The participants were selected for their extensive experience as full-time houseparents in the residential care facility, with at least two (2) years of service and houseparent training, and have undergone caregiver training. This ensured that the participants had enough "lived experience" to offer the rich, descriptive data necessary for the phenomenological study.

### Operational Data Analysis

This researcher was intending to use the transcendental approach of Moustakas, but after consulting research experts and mentors, it was decided that the Seven-Step Method by Colaizzi (1978) was a more practical and systematic approach to the management of the depth of the narratives that were to be collected. This approach to methodology enabled the researcher to follow a stricter audit trail and also enabled an improved clarity in recording the voice of the houseparents. By using HyperRESEARCH software and a qualitative expert, the researcher commenced the analysis process by familiarizing herself with the transcripts by reading them in detail to get a gut feel of the experiences of the houseparents.

### Participants' Profile

The participants in this study are the five houseparents and have undergone house parenting training, such as child safety, positive parenting, and the like of the TP residential care facility. These houseparents possess different numbers of years from three (3) years to eight (8) years in service as a houseparent, and with diverse backgrounds before their caregiving job.

Table 1 Profile of the participants

No.	Participants Pseudonyms	Age	No. Years as HP	Current Role	How the Children Addressed
1	JB	37 y.o.	3 Years	Houseparent	Mama
2	JM	31 y.o.	3 Years	Houseparent	Papa
3	CHR	34 y.o.	3 Years	Houseparent	Mama
4	GC	50 y.o.	8 Years	Houseparent	Mama
5	GL	40 y.o.	8 Years	Houseparent	Mama

### Presentation of Findings

This section entails a lived experience of houseparents working in a residential care facility. The description has been organized in terms of themes, with the respective categories being backed by codes. Based on the data, four (4) themes were discovered: "Biological, social, spiritual adaptation", "Rewards of Caregiving", "Sustaining well-being practice", and "Transformation".

These four themes were the experiences of houseparents in a residential home. The themes raise awareness of the challenges, the rewards, the well-being of the employees, and how they discover purpose and meaning in their jobs.

Table 2: Themes book. Developing themes from categories and codes of the experiences of Houseparents in a residential care facility.

SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS	CODES	CATEGORIES	THEMES
<p>" ... mag-dungan silag hilak. Oh lisod gyud kay, ma-overwhelm ka hilantan sila nga magsunod-sunod nga mag-dungan-dungan...naay giubo, naay gisip-on. Unya ang uban...naay moreklamo nga nasamad. So, kinahanglan gyud nimo sila i-cater one by one. Labi na ... naay time nga maskin ang house parent ga-sakit pud ...naay time nga duha ra ang maka-duty, tulo...dayon mag-eskwela nga kinahanglan ubanan. So, grabe gyud." <i>(When they all cry together. Oh, it is really hard because you get overwhelmed when they have fever one after another or all at once... one has a cough, one has a cold. And then others... one complains of being hurt. So, you really have to cater to them one by one. Especially when there are times that even the houseparent gets sick too... There are times when only two or three are on duty, then they have to go to school and need to be accompanied. So, it is really intense.)</i></p> <p>(Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 103-115)</p> <p>"...adunay mga nagka lain lain nga mga kinaiya adunay nagka lain lain nga trauma ug adunay mga naka lain lain nga experience....lahi lahi ang pag handle sa ila mao nang maka ingon ko nga challenging."<i>(...there are those with different personalities, there are those with different traumas, and there are those with different experiences... handling them differently is what makes me say it is challenging.)</i> (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 41-43)</p> <p>"Ang lisod..kay ... ang manawag ka...magsugo ka sa...mga chores nga ... murag dili gyud sila pakadungog...murag i-deadma lang nila. Unya kaning magpugong na lang ka kay dili man ka pwede nga magsiyagit." <i>(The difficult part is when you call them... you ask them to do chores but</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple demands</li> <li>• Difficulty of individualized care</li> <li>• Interpersonal conflict</li> </ul>	<p>Category 1. Caregiving demands</p>	<p>Theme 1: <b>BIOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, SPIRITUAL ADAPTATION</b></p>

<p><i>they don't seem to hear... they just ignore you. And then you just have to hold back because you can't shout.)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 115-118)</p> <p>"..., especially ana sa pag-discipline. So, lahi-lahi man gyud ang pag-discipline sa kada staff. So, ang pag-discipline nako sa akong anak is gusto unta nako i-discipline sa mga residents. So, dili na nako makuan kay staff man ko." <i>(Especially in discipline. So, the discipline of each staff member is really different. So, the way I discipline my own child, I would want to discipline the residents that way. But I can't do that because I am staff.)</i> (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 5, Line 121-123)</p> <p>"...Kung ... sayo sa buntag...sa mga boys, magpaligo ka, .....usahay maglagot ka kay ... lami gyud kaayo ihilak...kay di nila mabalaan asa ilang uniform, ilang medias, unya naay uniform nga imong ihatag sa ila, dili nila suoton...maguol ka basta magkarakara ka kay ... paliguan na nimo sila unya ga-sige pa sila og dula..." <i>(..When it is early morning... with the boys, you bathe them, sometimes you get so annoyed that you feel like crying... because they don't know where their uniform is, their socks, and then there's a uniform you give them, they won't wear it... You get sad because you're rushing to bathe them and they're still playing...)</i> (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 137-143)</p>			
<p>"... mag-join gyud ta sa mga activity sa gawas." <i>(We really join activities outside.)</i> (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 9, lines 262)</p> <p>"Ana lang gyud ko nga ginhawa. Inhale, exhale lang gyud ko kay ana gyud ko nga agoy basin- mapatid akong pasensya ani karon kay naa didtoy hilak siya unya naa pay nagkaguliyang diri sa gawas...So mag-inhale, exhale lang gyud ko para para gyud ma-relax akong ginhawa." <i>(I just breathe. Inhale, exhale because I'm afraid my patience might snap now 'cause there's crying there and there's chaos outside... So, I just inhale and exhale to really relax my</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community engagement</li> <li>● Active Rest</li> <li>● Physical exercise maintenance</li> </ul>	<p>Category 2.</p> <p>COPING</p>	

<p><i>breathing.</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 9, Line 301-307)</p> <p>"...dad-on sad nako gyud ang akong, kaugalingon sa malinaw nga dapit... muhawa sako sa ilaha. Ilingaw-lingaw sad nako akong kaugalingon...Mubalik ra ko ug maayo na." (...<i>I also bring myself to a peaceful place... I leave them for a while. I also entertain myself... I'll come back when I'm better.</i>) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 9, Line 497-507)</p> <p>"...mag magpagawas nimo imong gibati... na kulang kulangan imong stress nga na istorya nimo or na share, naay naminaw nimo ana." (...<i>you express what you feel... your stress is lessened when you talk about it or share it, someone listens to you.</i>) (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 5, Line 146-150)</p> <p>"Dili ka mag-apil-apil kay syempre imo silang i-settle. So, unsaon pag-settle kung apil ka nasuko pud...makalma ra pud ko. Nga dili na sad ko ingon nga ngamagdumot ana. Kalmahon ra pud nako akong kaugalingon." (<i>You don't get involved because of course you have to settle them. So, how can you settle if you're also angry... I just calm down. So that I won't be resentful. I just calm myself down.</i>) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 4&amp; 7Interview 114-115, 202-203)</p> <p>"Matulog. Matulog gyud ko aron ma lessen akong stress." (<i>Sleep. I really sleep to lessen my stress.</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 2, Page 4, Line 111)</p> <p>"...kinahanglan gyud ang prayer life. Ang pagbasa sa pulong sa Ginoo. Pagtuon..sa akong physical.. ga- paningkamot ko nga throughout sa week maka-pasingot. Maka-dula og basketball..." (...<i>prayer life is really needed. Reading the word of God. Studying... in my physical... I strive to sweat throughout the week. Play basketball...</i>) (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 6, lines 198-203)</p> <p>"Dala sa pag ampo... Kabalo gyud ko nga pirmi gyud ang Ginoo nag tabang sa akoa kay...dili gyud nako mahimo akong trabaho</p>			
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<p>kung wala gyud siya. So mao gyud akong ginahimo...mag pray gyud ko ani. Nga tabangan gyud ko niya." (<i>Through prayer... I really know that God always helps me because... I really can't do my job without Him. So that's what I really do... I really pray for this. That He will really help me.</i>) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 15, Lines 467-470)</p> <p>"Isa ana ang ako gyud kuan, ang akong personal nga ah relasyon sa Ginoo. Ang akong quiet time, ang akong devotion sa Ginoo isa gyud na sa mga butang nga ga- ... ga-sustain sa akoa sa para nga ma- ... dili gyud ma-burnout sa akong trabaho sa tanan nga akong gapangbuhaton." (<i>One of those is my personal relationship with God. My quiet time, my devotion to God, is really one of the things that sustains me so that I won't really get burned out in my work in everything that I do.</i>) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 6, lines 187-190)</p> <p>"Dili nimo taguan imong tinuod nga gibati kay ug imo syang taguan mag sakit man imong kasing imong dughan. So dapat i-istorya nimo oy nasuko ko sa imoha kay ingon ani imong gibuhat. So dili nimo sya dapat taguan gyud no. ' Kung naa sya'y dili maayo nga unsa'y pamatasan." (<i>You don't hide your true feelings because if you hide them, your heart and chest will hurt. So you should tell them, 'Hey, I'm angry with you because you did this.'</i> So you really shouldn't hide it. ' If they have bad behavior.) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 7, Line 239-242)</p>			
<p>"Akoa .....makalipay gyud bitaw kay ... I-love nako sila, then malipay ko kung dili ko makapasakit sa ila sa istorya..." (<i>For me... it really makes me happy because I love them, then I'm happy if I don't hurt them with my words...</i>) (Participant 5, Interview 3, Page 1, line 23-24)</p> <p>"gakalipay na pud dayon ko nga makita pud sila nga malipayon sila sa akong gibuhat para sa ilaha." (<i>I also get happy when I see them happy with what I've done for them.</i>) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 130-136)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Authentic engagement</li> <li>● Relational fulfillment</li> <li>● Affirmation of affection</li> </ul>	<p>Category 1. Joy</p>	<p>Theme 2: <b>REWARDS OF CAREGIVING</b></p>

<p>"reward nimo sa...pag-atiman, pag-care, paghatag nimo sa ilaha og care...Kung unsa...nga mga feelings ang gusto nimo mabati-an, mabati gyud nimo kung...ga-care ka sa ilaha..."(<i>your reward in...caring, taking care, giving them care...Whatever...feelings you want to feel, you will really feel them if...you care for them...</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 60-69)</p> <p>"... kana lang...makita nako nga safe sila or happy sila... Rewarding na siya sa akoo. Tapos ... mga achievers nila sa school, mao nga apil pud baya ko mahappy."(<i>Just that... when I see that they are safe or happy... that's rewarding for me. And then their achievements in school, that also makes me happy.</i>) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 100)</p> <p>"...usahay makita nako makapalipay..... 'naay silay gusto ba nga mahatag nimo unya...makita pud nako...as a Mama nga...love nimo sila ba...nakita nako sila nga murag gakahimuot sad sila. Ug, kining gaingonon na ko sila kay gaingon man pud ni sila nga,"Love you, Mama," ingana."(<i>...sometimes I see it makes me happy... like 'they have something they want that you can give them and then... I also see... as a Mama that... you love them... I see them that they also seem pleased. And, I tell them this because they also say, 'Love you, Mama,' like that.</i>) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 130-136)</p>			
<p>"Ah gkalipay ko nga... although...employee ko pero at the same time matawag ko sa mga kabataan nga usa ka amahan...tungod kay sa ilahang sitwasyon nga walay ginikanan, usa ko nga magamit nga...aduna silay ma tawag nga papa." (<i>Ah, I'm happy that... although... I'm an employee but at the same time I can be called a father by the children... because in their situation where they have no parents, I can be used as... someone they can call father.</i>) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 98-101)</p> <p>"makita nako labi na sa mag-atubang ko sa mga babies nga murag kalipay ra gyud kaayo ko. Nagpasalamat gyud diay ko ana</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal-Identification</li> <li>• Surrogate motherhood</li> <li>• Filling the love gap</li> </ul>	<p>Category 2: Surrogate parenting</p>	

<p>dako sa Ginoo kay nabelong ko diri ani nga center. Gitagaan ko niya ug trabaho nga ing ani gyud." (<i>I see it especially when I face the babies, I'm really very happy. I'm really very thankful to God that I belong here in this center. He gave me a job like this.</i>) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 70-81)</p> <p>"Sa akua...naay bili sa akua kay .....ma-feel nako nga naa...koy bili sa ilaha ... murag ma-hug ko nila ba. then bisan nalang 'gug tawgog "Mama."...ma-touch na ko ana." (<i>For me... it has value for me because... I feel that I have... value to them, like they hug me. then even just being called "Mama."... I get touched by that.</i>) (Participant 5, Interview 3, Page 2, Lines 36-37)</p> <p>".. usahay sa balay feeling down kaayo ko pero pag-abot diri kay motagbo dayon na silang tulo...Ma feel bitaw nimo na validated ka...moana sila na "Mama..."(<i>...sometimes at home I feel very down but when I arrive here, the three of them immediately meet me... You really feel validated... they say "Mama..."</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 3, Page 2, lines 65-69)</p> <p>"...Dili nako makabaylo ang akong pagka-house parent ana kay uhm though kapoy siya lisod siya kay naa man gyud mga restriction dili man parehas sa ... atoa gyud nga anak. Naa man tay dos and don'ts. Pero...isip bitaw ikaw mama kay ako na nanarbaho naman gyud ko nga ... since nag-two years old gyud akong mga anak.. wala gyud bitaw kaayo nako sila na atiman. So,..fulfillment sya gihapon sa ako sa wala nako nabuhat sa akong mga anak..." (<i>...I wouldn't trade my being a houseparent for anything because uhm, although it is tiring, it is difficult because there are really restrictions, it is not the same as with our own children. We have dos and don'ts. But... as a mother, because I've been working since my children were two years old... I really wasn't able to take care of them much. So... it is still a fulfillment for me for what I wasn't able to do for my children...</i>)</p>			
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<p>(Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 148-160)</p> <p>"Happy ko. Nga usa ko ka-house parent kay wala pa nako na-experience sa pagka-mama nako sa akong mga anak naa sad koy na-experience sa lahi nga bata...proud ko nga...nahimo ko diri sa sa center...Isa ka-mama." <i>(I'm happy. That I am a houseparent because I haven't experienced being a mother to my own children, but I also experienced it with other children... I'm proud that... I became here in the center... A mother.)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 2, Page 1, Lines 26-28)</p>			
<p>"...ipakita nako sa ilaha... ang...pag-amuma nako sa ilaha, unsaon nako sila... ang akong...gipa kita karon...mahinahong pag-sulti...Gina-adjust ko akong kaugalingon. Gina-pugngan ko akong kaugalingon para dili na gyud ko makahatag sa ilaha og ... makapasakit sa ilaha. Then ipakita ko na pud sa ilaha nga love nako sila...pag-abot...nako."Hi, mga anak ko, good morning! Love you!"..Gipakita gyud nako sa ilaha." <i>(...I show them... my... nurturing of them, how I... what I show now... gentle speaking... I adjust myself. I restrain myself so that I won't really give them something that will hurt them. Then I also show them that I love them... when I arrive... I say, 'Hi, my children, good morning! Love you!'. I really show it to them.)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 7, Line 219-229)</p> <p>"...ingana ra gyud diay ang strategy sa pagpahinayhinay sa mga kabataan nga...love gyud nimo nga tinuod gyud ka nga Mama ba." Then makita pud dayon nimo siya nga pag-morning dayon nga,"Morning, Mama...! Love you!"." <i>(...that's really the strategy to gently handle the children that... you truly love them, that you are a real Mama." Then you'll immediately see them in the morning saying, "Morning, Mama...! Love you!".)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 5, Line 138-141)</p> <p>"... dili ko gakapoyon sa ilaha og atiman ay kay...gusto nako ipa-feel sa ilaha ba nga ... naa pa sila diri ma-atiman sila kay dili baya na sila permanente diri. gusto nako ipa-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gentle communication</li> <li>• Mutual understanding</li> <li>• Parental-love</li> </ul>	<p>Category 1. RELATEDNESS</p>	<p>THEME 3: SUSTAINING WELL-BEING PRACTICE</p>

<p>experience sa ilaha ang murag ... love.." <i>(I don't get tired of taking care of them because... I want to make them feel that while they are still here, they are taken care of because they are not permanently here. I want them to experience that kind of love..)</i> (Participant 5, Interview 2, Page 4, Line 100-102)</p> <p>"... magkasinabot, magkasinabot sa tanang butang, sa mga rules, ang sa kung unsay angay buhaton. Tapos sa relationship, nga okay tanan, walay wala hinanakit." <i>(That we understand each other, understand everything, the rules, what should be done. And in the relationship, that everything is okay, no resentment.)</i> (Participant 3, Interview 3, Page 1, Line 19-20)</p>			
<p>"Ang bungol siguro amang maka kuan man pud kay naa man tay naa man training sa una although dili...dili kay inana ka daghan ang natun-an pero ah so far maka...communicate man sa ilaha pinaagi sa pagtan-aw sa mga gestures or sa...iyahang buot ipasabot nga mga sinyales. Mga signs." <i>(Perhaps the deaf can also manage because we had training before, although not... not that much was learned but ah so far we can... communicate with them by looking at their gestures or at... what they mean by their signals. Signs.)</i> (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 14, Line 433-436)</p> <p>"Ako lang syang action actionan. Mag action lang ko nga ... ma sabtan niya..Mga hand gestures lang and kung dili pud gyud sya maka bantay akong estomp akong tiil para mag vibrate.. maka dungog or maka bantay sya kung naay vibration." <i>(I just act it out for him. I just act so that he understands... Just hand gestures and if he really doesn't notice, I stomp my foot so it vibrates... he can hear or notice if there's a vibration.)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 23, Line 708-714)</p> <p>"Ang mga simple nga mga actions mga sign language..Kung makabasa siya ako gyud ginasulat...dayon. Basa pud niya... So, kung saktosa mga ana-ana pud. (nodding) Mag yangoyango... ." <i>(The simple actions, sign language... If he can read, I really write it</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sign language skills</li> <li>● Non-verbal action</li> <li>● Manual signing</li> </ul>	<p>Category 2. COMPETENCE</p>	

<p><i>down... immediately. He also reads it... So, if it is correct for those things. (nodding).)</i> (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 14, Line 412-417)</p>			
<p>"So ah most of the time ang akong ga buhaton, ginacheck nako kanunay ang labi na...sa akong oras sa mga bata...basin ug...naka focus ra kayo ko atong isa ang uban dili o wala kaayo koy time sa ilaha, most of the time...gahatag ko ug time...pero kasagara wala...sa mga babaye para...nalang pud safety purposes most of the time sa mga lalaki ako gyud gina angay ang akong oras sa pag bonding...even sa pag desiplina kay basin ug...katong isa mejo naging unfair ko sa ila..." <i>(So ah most of the time what I do, I always check especially... my time with the children... in case... I focused too much on one and the others didn't or I didn't have much time for them, most of the time... I give time... but usually not... for the girls for... safety purposes most of the time for the boys I really adjust my time for bonding... even for discipline because maybe... I might have been a bit unfair to the others...)</i> (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 104-110)</p> <p>"...Balance...tungod kay...naa man pud koy...rules nga ginasunod. Naay standards nga pamaagi sa...pagdala sa mga bata. Pero at the same time, naa pud mga pamaagi nako nga...siguro sa pagkuan lang, pag-approach sa ilaha, oo, in a way nga ma...deal sila nga nakasubay gihapon sa...kung unsa ang standards or pamaagi nga gihatag...labi na sa...DswD..." <i>(...Balance...because...I also have...rules that I follow. There are standard ways of...handling the children. But at the same time, I also have my own ways of...maybe just in dealing, approaching them, yes, in a way that they are...dealt with still in accordance with...whatever standards or methods are given...especially by...DSWD...)</i> (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 2, lines 47-51)</p> <p>"...usahay ang bata man ' gud kay naa sila'y uh lisod kontrolon nga...kinaiyahan labi na og...mag-tantrum kung sila dili...makasabot sa ilahang sitwasyon....So ang usa...nga mga butang nga nakita nako nga effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prioritizing child welfare</li> <li>● Root-cause understanding</li> <li>● Addressing problems</li> </ul>	<p>Category 3.</p> <p>AUTONOMY</p>	

<p>nga pamaagi is.. Dili sabayan ang ilahang kasuko...Ipakalma na sila and then istoryahon pagkahuman.. sa ilahang.. gebate or kung panahon nga makalma na sila kay para nga ma-avoid...next nila nga panahon nga...moagi na pud sila or mubuhat na pud sila adto." (<i>...sometimes the child ' is difficult to control... their nature especially if... they throw tantrums if they don't... understand their situation....So one... of the things I found effective is.. Don't match their anger... Calm them down and then talk to them afterwards.. about their.. feelings or when they are calm so that it can be avoided... the next time they... do it again or do it again.</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 128-130,132-136)</p>			
<p>"...dako kaayong tabang ang...proper communication labina ang sa turn over. Kay kung wala 'ah wala kay communication sa imong 'kauban nga maoy imong ka turn over...dako kaayo ug ikatabang labina sa imong pag facilitate sa bata for the rest of the day...Usa pud...ang polisiya sa logbook. Kay didto nimo makita kung unsa ang mga nahitabo just in case...naay nalimtan sa turn over so naa kay matan-aw naa kay Mabasa didto sa logbook..." (<i>...proper communication is a great help, especially during turnover. Because if there's no communication with your colleague during turnover... it helps a lot, especially in facilitating the child for the rest of the day... Also... the logbook policy. Because there you can see what happened just in case... something was forgotten during turnover, so you have something to look at, you can read it in the logbook...</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 9-10, Line 363-373)</p> <p>".. mag-logbook. Kung okay ba sila or dili. Unsa ilang gibuhad anang adlaw or nagsakit ba sila...." (<i>...the logbook. If they are okay or not. What they did that day or if they were sick...</i>) (Participant 5, Interview 1, Page 21-22, Line 637-644)</p> <p>"Daghan silag support system....gawas sa,...stress debriefing ug ... mental health awareness, naa pud mi...retreat.. Nga maka-relax. Maka-out pud. Kauban...sa mga co-houseparents." (<i>They have a lot of support system....aside from,...stress debriefing and</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helpful policies</li> <li>● Proper documentation</li> <li>● Perceived Organizational Support</li> </ul>	<p>Category 4. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT</p>	

<p><i>mental health awareness, we also have...retreat.. That can relax. Can also go out. Together...with co-houseparents.)</i> (Participant 1, Interview 2, Page 8, Line 242-246)</p> <p>"...tungod kay...automatic man pud...maminaw ang center head. Kung unsa ang mga gapangbati-on sa staff. So, oo, isa man pud...mo, mo-tugot man pud...nga sige, pahulay sa ka or rest ka or unsa ba kaha ang mga...suggestion. So, usahay maka-kuan siya, maka-relieve siya, makatabang siya nga...makulangan ang imong stress kay makaingon ka nga,...sinuportahan man...ma-relieve mi aning a stress nga among gapangbati-on." (<i>...because...the center head automatically...listens. To what the staff are feeling. So, yes, it is also one...they, they also allow...that okay, you rest first or you rest or whatever...suggestions. So, sometimes it can...it can relieve, it can help that...your stress is lessened because you can say that...we are supported...we are relieved of this stress that we are feeling.</i>) (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 5, lines 164-170)</p>			
<p>"...kani nga ministry nga gihatag sa Ginoo, diha gyud ko nag-start na fall in love sa pag-care sa mga bata." (<i>...this ministry given by God, that's where I really started to fall in love with caring for children.</i>) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 1, Line 31-43)</p> <p>"Ah I think ang isa sa mga rewarding nga mga butang nga akong gibuhad isip isa ka houseparent is...pag-guide sa mga kabataan labina sa esperitohanon nga bahin labi na kung makita nako nga ... nag tubo sila... Kabalo na sila mo-ampoo daghan na sila ug memory verse nga gaka-recite gaka-kita nila ang ilahang .....kibale ah.. kakulangon...or kung unsa ang mga sayop nga ilang gaka buhat nga dili maka hatag ug kalipay sa parents labi na gyud sa Ginoo, kana isa na sya sa rewarding nga part para sa ako ah isip us ka staff diri sa facility." (<i>Ah, I think one of the most rewarding things I do as a houseparent is... guiding the children, especially in the spiritual aspect, especially when I see that they are growing... They already know how to pray, they have many memory verses that they</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divine Purpose</li> <li>• Spiritual Mentoring</li> <li>• Work as a ministry</li> </ul>	<p>Category 1. CAREGIVING AS MINISTRY</p>	<p>Theme 4: TRANSFORMATION</p>

<p><i>recite, they see their... what you call it... shortcomings... or whatever mistakes they make that don't bring joy to the parents, especially to God, that is one of the rewarding parts for me as a staff here at the facility.) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 2, Lines 60-65)</i></p> <p><i>"...gi-pray ko ni siya sa wala pa ko nag-apply. So, uh, I do not consider this as a job pero as a ministry gyud. Fulfillment pud siya sa akua uh so dinhi ko gidala sa Ginoo.." (...I prayed for this before I applied. So, uh I do not consider this as a job but as a ministry. It is also a fulfillment for me uh so God brought me here..)</i> (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 45-48)</p> <p><i>"Ni join ko sa institution project tungod kay unang una nag atiman sila sa mga kabataan ug isip usa ka...adunay kasing-kasing nga mo tudlo, adunay kaluoy sa mga bata, adunay kahangawa sa akua nga magpagamit ug mo atiman usab sa mga kabataan." (I joined the Institution because first and foremost, they care for children, and as someone who... has a heart to teach, has compassion for children, has a concern for me to be used, and to also care for children.) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 1, Lines 32-34)</i></p>			
<p><i>"...lipay kaayo ko kay nabilong ko ani nga.. center sa TP kay usahay naa ko'y problema sa balay, pagtrabaho nako nga murag mawala gani akong...problema...kay murag gakalipay ko sa mga kabataan nga gatanaw..." (...I'm very happy because I belong to this center, the TP, because sometimes I have problems at home, when I work, it is like my...problems...disappear...because I feel happy with the children watching..)</i> (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 70-81)</p> <p><i>"...Garbo kaayo nako nga nagtrabaho baya ko didto sa Institution..." (I'm very proud that I worked there at the institution.) (Participant 5, Interview 2, Page 8, lines 256-261)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirmation of affection</li> <li>• Professional identity</li> <li>• Professional growth</li> </ul>	<p>Category 2.</p> <p>Meaningful service engagement</p>	

<p>"Happy ko. Nga usa ko ka-house parent kay wala pa nako na-experience sa pagka-mama nako sa akong mga anak naa sad koy na-experience sa lahi nga bata...proud ko nga... nahimo ko diri sa sa center... Isa ka-mama." (<i>I'm happy. That I'm a houseparent because I haven't yet experienced being a mom to my own children, but I also got to experience different children... I'm proud that... what I've become here at the center... A mom.</i>) (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 1, Lines 26-28)</p>			
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**Theme 1: Biological, Social, Spiritual Adaptation**

“...maskin ang house parent ga-sakit pud ... duha... tulo ra ang maka-duty...” (*there are times that even the houseparent gets sick too... there are times when only two or three are on duty*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 103-115) illustrates microsystem overload amid staffing shortages. Houseparents adapt biologically (physical/emotional health), socially (interpersonal dynamics), and spiritually to navigate residential care demands. Their personal limits are frequently stretched, and they must put in a huge amount of emotional work into it. This is in line with the general interpretation of job satisfaction and development environment by caregiving (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021). The problems of houseparents can be viewed through the prism of the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in which the immediate relations within the residential facility (microsystem) are shaped by the relations between various settings (mesosystem) and institutional policies (exosystem).

**Category 1: Caregiving Demands**

This category emphasizes the exhausting and complex aspect of caregiving in a residential facility. Houseparents are constantly being bombarded with duties (and sometimes all at once) that make them feel overwhelmed and stretched to the limit. The individual backgrounds and traumas of every child require care that is highly individual, further complicating the situation. Both intra-personal and interpersonal conflicts among the children and the staff are common phenomena that only add to a stressful working environment. All of these aspects and the frequent understaffing make everyday tasks a big ordeal. This is in line with the literature that has shown that Caregivers are likely to be emotionally exhausted and burn out as a result of the heavy and hard work experiences in delivering care (Carvalho et al., 2022). At the center of this burden are the “multiple demands and the difficulty of individualized care.

One of the most common complaints that houseparents report is the sense that they are overwhelmed by conflicting crises, including simultaneous crying babies, health issues, reports of injuries, and logistics, including school escort. This is made worse by workforce deficits or personal illness, making working days a difficult experience.

Participant 1 is quite descriptive about such a disorganized environment:

"... mag-dungan silag hilak. Oh lisod gyud kay, ma-overwhelm ka hilantan sila nga magsunod-sunod nga mag-dungan-dungan...naay giubo, naay gisip-on. Unya ang uban...naay moreklamo nga nasamad. So, kinahanglan gyud nimo sila i-cater one by one. Labi na ... naay time nga maskin ang house parent ga-sakit pud ...naay time nga duha ra ang maka-duty, tulo...dayon mag-eskwela nga kinahanglan ubanan. So, grabe gyud." (*When they all cry together. Oh, it is really hard because you get overwhelmed when they have fever one after another or all at once... one has a cough, one has a cold. And then others... one complains of being hurt. So, you really have to cater to them one by one. Especially when there are times that even the houseparent gets sick too... There are*

*times when only two or three are on duty, then they have to go to school and need to be accompanied. So, it is really intense.)* (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 103-115)

It is a direct manifestation of the experience of heavy and hard work, which causes emotional burnout and exhaustion (Carvalho et al., 2022). Participant 1 describes the complexity in terms of the need for flexibility and information on all types of health concerns and the various needs that the residents may have (National Institute on Aging, 2021). In terms of the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), this situation has to do with the strong demands of the microsystem (direct interactions with children) and mesosystem (integration of caregiving and school duties), which are usually intensified by the lack of resources in the exosystem (institutional staffing).

The routine life, like morning bath, also causes great challenges and emotional burden, as it is described by Participant 1:

"...Kung ... sayo sa buntag...sa mga boys, magpaligo ka, .....usahay maglagot ka kay ... lami gyud kaayo ihilak...kay di nila mabalaan asa ilang uniform, ilang medias, unya naay uniform nga imong ihatag sa ila, dili nila suoton...maguol ka basta magkarakara ka kay ... paliguan na nimo sila unya ga-sige pa sila og dula..." (*..When it is early morning... with the boys, you bathe them, sometimes you get so annoyed that you feel like crying... because they don't know where their uniform is, their socks, and then there's a uniform you give them, they won't wear it... You get sad because you're rushing to bathe them and they're still playing...*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 137-143)

This also shows the reality of occupational 24/7 physical-emotional burnout in understaffed residential homes (Miranda et al., 2025). Here can be seen the necessity of the genuine acting and maintenance of professional boundaries regardless of the feelings of ambiguity (Hochschild, 1983; Nonnis et al., 2022). This unceasing repression of frustration in the self and the need to stay calm even when in a state of wanting to cry is a typical instance of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983), as houseparents learn to manage their emotions to portray a certain emotional expression in the position they are in. These children come with different personalities, traumas, and backgrounds, and they require different treatment- something that is incredibly challenging for houseparents.

This is the individualized challenge that participant 2 brings out:

"...adunay mga nagka lain lain nga mga kinaiya adunay nagka lain lain nga trauma ug adunay mga naka lain lain nga experience....lahi lahi ang pag handle sa ila mao nang maka ingon ko nga challenging."(*...there are those with different personalities, there are those with different traumas, and there are those with different experiences... handling them differently is what makes me say it is challenging.*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 41-43)

This is in tandem with the knowledge that Caregivers encounter numerous complicated relational processes in their effort to establish secure attachments. These obstacles become even more complex due to the cultural and institutional aspects" (Schmidt et al., 2021; Patagia Bakaraki et al., 2024). The realization of the complexity of tasks is a considerable step towards offering residential care personnel their particularly definite needs (Dudman et al., 2019). Such a variety of microsystems creates the need to constantly adapt and solve problems, contributing to the cognitive and emotional burden of a houseparent. In addition to the direct care work, the houseparents often face interpersonal conflict with their children, an additional source of stress and requiring high levels of emotional regulation.

Not doing housework, e.g., by children, is a major source of frustration, and houseparents must employ enormous restraint.

Participant 4 shared:

"Ang lisod..kay ... ang manawag ka...magsugo ka sa...mga chores nga ... murag dili gyud sila pakadungog...murag i- deadma lang nila. Unya kaning magpugong na lang ka kay dili man ka pwede nga

magsiyagit." (*The difficult part is when you call them... you ask them to do chores but they don't seem to hear... they just ignore you. And then you just have to hold back because you can't shout.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 115-118)

This is the situation of the complex relational dynamics caregivers must deal with (Schmidt et al., 2021; Patagia Bakaraki et al., 2024) and the necessity of the authentic performance and maintenance of professional boundaries (Hochschild, 1983; Nonnis et al., 2022) against the inner frustration. The fact that the houseparent consciously suppressed her anger by not yelling even when it felt as though she was being ignored is a direct example of what Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983) is, as the personal feelings were suppressed to accommodate the emotional needs of the created caregiver role in the microsystem.

Even techniques of discipline vary among the employees, introducing the possible discrepancy and adding additional difficulties, which is another aspect of interpersonal conflict in the care delivery setting.

Participant 3 narrated:

"..., especially ana sa pag-discipline. So, lahi-lahi man gyud ang pag-discipline sa kada staff. So, ang pag-discipline nako sa akong anak is gusto unta nako i-discipline sa mga residents. So, dili na nako makuan kay staff man ko." (*Especially in discipline. So, the discipline of each staff member is really different. So, the way I discipline my own child, I would want to discipline the residents that way. But I can't do that because I am staff.*) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 5, Line 121-123)

This brings out the multifaceted demands and conflict of roles of the professional-emotional boundaries (Miranda et al., 2025) and the necessity of the institutional processes according to which the relationship complications of Filipino houseparents can be elaborated (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021). The case in point is an illustration of the mesosystem level of the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as the inconsistency of care and the inefficiency of the houseparent to discharge his or her duties directly relate to the contact of the staff members and their different strategies. Personal tension of a desire to implement a personal style of parenting and professionalism also includes a lot of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983), with the houseparent having to balance their own feelings and wishes with the requirements of the institutions.

## Category 2: Coping

In order to alleviate the huge stresses and prevent burnout, houseparents employ diverse coping strategies. Such strategies include external socialization with others as far as inner spirituality and care of the physical self are concerned, indicating that they are holistically concerned with their well-being. This is in line with the literature on self-care practices, which has the power to influence and enhance these states and support the well-being of the caregivers (Hammersmith & Lin, 2019; Birnie et al., 2021). The coping styles play a critical role in ensuring that houseparents ensure their biological and social adaptation to the challenging microsystem of the residential facility. Houseparents should engage in community activities and rest as a way of de-stressing and keeping their minds healthy.

Participant 3 emphasizes the significance of external activities:

"... mag-join gyud ta sa mga activity sa gawas." (*We really join activities outside.*) (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 9, lines 262)

This directly supports the idea that Exercise, socialization, and mindfulness are self-care practices, which have been demonstrated to influence and improve them in these states and improve the well-being of caregivers (Hammersmith Lin, 2019; Birnie et al., 2021). This interaction with the greater community (mesosystem) offers a much-needed relief from the high pressure of the microsystem. One easy, but effective, way to deal with immediate stress and stop emotional outbursts is deep breathing:

Participant 1 narrated:

"Ana lang gyud ko nga ginhawa. Inhale, exhale lang gyud ko kay ana gyud ko nga agoy basin- mapatid akong pasensya ani karon kay naa didtoy hilak siya unya naa pay nagkaguliyang diri sa gawas... So mag-inhale, exhale lang gyud ko para para gyud ma-relax akong ginhawa." (*I just breathe. Inhale, exhale because I'm afraid my patience might snap now 'cause there's crying there and there's chaos outside... So, I just inhale and exhale to really relax my breathing.*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 9, Line 301-307)

This echoes the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing the distress of caregivers and attaining a positive mental outcome (Barlow et al., 2022). The houseparent controls his/her inner state to stay calm enough to control their emotions through this internal strategy, which is a major part of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983).

Houseparents can refresh themselves by finding quiet time and pursuing their own distractions.

Participant 4 shared:

"...dad-on sad nako gyud ang akong, kaugalingon sa malinaw nga dapit... muhawa sako sa ilaha. Ilingaw-lingaw sad nako akong kaugalingon... Mubalik ra ko ug maayo na." (*...I also bring myself to a peaceful place... I leave them for a while. I also entertain myself... I'll come back when I'm better.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 9, Line 497-507)

This is in line with the more general notion of self-care wellness (Hammersmith Lin, 2019; Birnie et al., 2021). This can be done by temporarily leaving the microsystem to restore oneself. Having a person to talk to and expressing emotions is a way to relieve stress:

Participant 3 narrated:

"...mag magpagawas nimo imong gibati... na kulang kulangan imong stress nga na istorya nimo or na share, naay naminaw nimo ana." (*...you express what you feel... your stress is lessened when you talk about it or share it, someone listens to you.*) (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 5, Line 146-150)

This emphasizes the significance of social support (Li and Peng, 2022) and the emotional value of a deeper connection and involvement (Carvalho et al., 2022). This mesosystem interaction is an important support mechanism.

Calmness and not feeling angry are voluntary actions to resolve interpersonal conflicts.

Participant 3 shared:

"Dili ka mag-apil-apil kay syempre imo silang i-settle. So, unsaon pag-settle kung apil ka nasuko pud... makalma ra pud ko. Nga dili na sad ko ingon nga ngamagdumot ana. Kalmahon ra pud nako akong kaugalingon." (*You don't get involved because of course you have to settle them. So, how can you settle if you're also angry... I just calm down. So that I won't be resentful. I just calm myself down.*) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 4 & 7 Interview 114-115, 202-203)

This shows that the performance and working within professional boundaries are authentic (Hochschild, 1983; Nonnis et al., 2022) needed in the position. Here is a perfect example of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983) as the houseparent makes a conscious effort to control his or her emotions to de-escalate the situation and remain professional.

Sleep is a basic stress-reducing coping mechanism:

Participant 1 described: "Matulog. Matulog gyud ko aron ma lessen akong stress." (*Sleep. I really sleep to lessen my stress.*) (Participant 1, Interview 2, Page 4, Line 111)

This is a basic self-care practice that contributes to overall well-being (Hammersmith Lin, 2019; Birnie et al., 2021), essential for biological adaptation.

Spiritual practices, such as prayer and reading religious verse, provide strength and guidance. Participant 2 narrated:

"...kinahanglan gyud ang prayer life. Ang pagbasa sa pulong sa Ginoo. Pagtuon..sa akong physical.. ga-paningkamot ko nga throughout sa week maka-pasingot. Maka-dula og basketball..." (*...prayer life is really needed. Reading the word of God. Studying... in my physical... I strive to sweat throughout the week. Play basketball...*) (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 6, lines 198-203)

This is similar to spiritual reframing (Li and Peng, 2022) and the fact that service commitment was mediated by spiritual calling by 62 percent (Esaki and Liu, 2023). This brings out the spiritual aspect of the adjustment, giving a sense of direction and strength.

Prayer is an appeal, an appeal to assistance as described by Participant 4:

"Dala sa pag ampo... Kabalo gyud ko nga pirmi gyud ang Ginoo nag tabang sa akoa kay...dili gyud nako mahimo akong trabaho kung wala gyud siya. So mao gyud akong ginahimo...mag pray gyud ko ani. Nga tabangan gyud ko niya." (*Through prayer... I really know that God always helps me because... I really can't do my job without Him. So that's what I really do... I really pray for this. That He will really help me.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 15, Lines 467-470)

This promotes the idea of a sense of calling, which is preserved by faith and collaboration, since the principal asset of resilience when there is a lack of resources (Garcia et al., 2025). This spiritual coping technique offers strength to the personal belief system of the houseparent.

The key to houseparent maintenance and burnout prevention is a personal relationship with God and regular quiet time:

Participant 2 shared:

"Isa ana ang ako gyud kuan, ang akong personal nga ah relasyon sa Ginoo. Ang akong quiet time, ang akong devotion sa Ginoo isa gyud na sa mga butang nga ga- ... ga-sustain sa akoa sa para nga ma- ... dili gyud ma-burnout sa akong trabaho sa tanan nga akong gapangbuhaton." (*One of those is my personal relationship with God. My quiet time, my devotion to God, is really one of the things that sustains me so that I won't really get burned out in my work in everything that I do.*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 6, lines 187-190)

It supports the role of spiritual calling (Esaki and Liu, 2023) and spiritual reframing (Li and Peng, 2022) as coping strategies, which are essential in the long-term spiritual adaptation.

Emotional health requires open and candid expression of feeling, even the unpleasant. Participant 1 shared:

"Dili nimo taguan imong tinuod nga gibati kay ug imo syang taguan mag sakit man imong kasing imong dughan. So dapat i-istorya nimo oy nasuko ko sa imoha kay ingon ani imong gibuhat. So dili nimo sya dapat taguan gyud no. ' Kung naa sya'y dili maayo nga unsa'y pamatasan." (*You don't hide your true feelings because if you hide them, your heart and chest will hurt. So you should tell them, 'Hey, I'm angry with you because you did this.' So you really shouldn't hide it. ' If they have bad behavior.*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 7, Line 239-242)

This authentic expression complements workplace Emotional Labor (surface/deep acting), enabling sustained performance (Hochschild, 1983; Nonnis et al., 2022). Although certain elements of the role demand Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983), this assertion indicates the significance of genuine expression of emotions in proper situations to the well-being of the houseparent, which indicates a balance between surface acting and deep acting in emotional labor.

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## Theme 2: Rewards of Caregiving

Regardless of the enormous odds, houseparents find ultimate fulfillment and pleasure in their work. It is a theme of the inherent rewards that keep them going, usually based on the emotional bonds they build and the difference they see in the lives of the children. This is in line with the results that caregivers are very satisfied with their work despite all the challenges (Harris et al., 2023). This meaning-seeking and fulfillment in their work is consistent with the Logotherapy model (Frankl, 1959), which assumes that humans are motivated above all by a will to meaning. These rewarding experiences are facilitated by positive interactions and relationships within the residential facility that lead to the positive microsystem as outlined by the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### Category 1: Joy

This category emphasizes the profound feeling of joy and satisfaction that houseparents find in their engagement with the children. This happiness is usually in the simplest of moments of bonding, the happiness of the children, and the validation of their work. This joy is brought by the affirmation of affection and related fulfillment. These experiences directly exemplify Logotherapy in that they are directly involved in the meaning and purpose of the houseparents (Frankl, 1959). The love houseparents have for children, and the delight they get in not hurting them, are essential sources of happiness.

Participant 5 describes:

"Akoa .....makalipay gyud bitaw kay ... I-love nako sila, then malipay ko kung dili ko makapasakit sa ila sa istorya..." (*For me... it really makes me happy because I love them, then I'm happy if I don't hurt them with my words...*) (Participant 5, Interview 3, Page 1, line 23-24)

This is an example of a stronger attachment and engagement with the person under care in that it is one of the emotional rewards of being a carer (Carvalho et al., 2022). This strong sense of meaning in the microsystem is a great source of emotion, and it is very much in line with the Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

It is a great joy to see how happy the children are as a consequence of their care

Participant 4 narrated:

"gagalipay na pud dayon ko nga makita pud sila nga malipayon sila sa akong gibuhay para sa ilaha." (*I also get happy when I see them happy with what I've done for them.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 130-136)

This is in line with witnessing child transformation with the help of family-like bonds (Lawson and Quinn, 2023) and making a difference as one of the main rewards. The sense of purpose and fulfillment, which the houseparent feels because of the positive results in the lives of the children, is an important principle of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The emotional bond and the emotions one experiences in taking care of the children are, in themselves, according to Participant 1:

"Reward nimo sa...pag-atiman, pag-care, paghatag nimo sa ilaha og care...Kung unsa...nga mga feelings ang gusto nimo mabati-an, mabati gyud nimo kung...ga-care ka sa ilaha..."(*your reward in...caring, taking care, giving them care...Whatever...feelings you want to feel, you will really feel them if...you care for them...*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 60-69)

This strengthens the concept of a more intimate contact and engagement (Carvalho et al., 2022) as a sentimental advantage. The caregiving process, intrinsically rewarding emotionally, will add to the overall well-being and meaning of the houseparent, which is an aspect of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

It is very rewarding to see the kids happy, healthy, and doing well in school. Participant 3 stated: "... kana lang...makita nako nga safe sila or happy sila... Rewarding na siya sa akua. Tapos ... mga achievers nila sa school, mao nga apil pud baya ko mahappy." (*Just that... when I see that they are safe or happy... that's rewarding for me. And then their achievements in school, that also makes me happy.*) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 100)

This is connected directly with witnessing child transformation and making a difference (Lawson and Quinn, 2023). The fact that the children are developing positively due to the care of the houseparent in the microsystem gives us direct proof of how significant the role of the houseparent is, which gives them the will to meaning in accordance with the Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The demonstrations of love and affection that the children give them, calling them Mama, are highly gratifying. Participant 4 shared:

"...usahay makita nako makapalipay..... 'naay silay gusto ba nga mahatag nimo unya...makita pud nako...as a Mama nga...love nimo sila ba...nakita nako sila nga murag gakahimuot sad sila. Ug, kining gaingonon na ko sila kay gaingon man pud ni sila nga, "Love you, Mama," ingana." (*...sometimes I see it makes me happy... like 'they have something they want that you can give them and then... I also see... as a Mama that... you love them... I see that they also seem pleased. And, I tell them this because they also say, 'Love you, Mama,' like that.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 130-136)

This stresses the emotional sustenance through the help of attachment relationships that defeat loneliness (McGarry Feeney, 2023). Such displays of love in the microsystem help the houseparent to achieve relational fulfillment and belonging, which are vital to well-being.

## Category 2: Surrogate Parenting

"Ah gkalipay ko nga... matawag ko sa mga kabataan nga usa ka amahan" (*Ah, I'm happy that... I can be called a father by the children...*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 98-101) reveals profound fulfillment when houseparents become surrogate parental figures.

This category shows the great rewards that are experienced by houseparents when they assume a parental role to children who do not have biological parents. This includes not only the typically simple care, but also the emotional assistance, counseling, and the feeling of belonging, which in many cases helps to establish a considerable gap in the lives of the children and even the houseparents themselves in their sense of meaning. The notion of filling the love gap and therapeutic welcoming is highly welcomed by this concept. This job that is usually emotionally invested in can be identified as a kind of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983), though one with a high level of intrinsic rewards and value, and therefore with Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959). The formation of these family-like relations in the residential environment is a significant component of the microsystem that is explained by the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Other houseparents experience pride and mission when serving as father figures to orphans:

Participant 2 described:

"Ah gkalipay ko nga... although...employee ko pero at the same time matawag ko sa mga kabataan nga usa ka amahan...tungod kay sa ilahang sitwasyon nga walay ginikanan, usa ko nga magamit nga...aduna silay ma tawag nga papa." (*Ah, I'm happy that... although... I'm an employee, but at the same time I can be called a father by the children... because in their situation where they have no parents, I can be used as... someone they can call father.*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 98-101)

This can be connected with the fact that the attachment relationships eliminate loneliness with the help of emotional support (McGarry Feeney, 2023) and the significance of constant attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969). Such an act of offering of a parental figure, a vital aspect in the microsystem, is a significant source of meaning

to the houseparent, which is in line with Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959). Being a part of the center and capable of delivering care is an important source of joy and gratitude.

Participant 4 narrated:

"makita nako labi na sa mag-atubang ko sa mga babies nga murag kalipay ra gyud kaayo ko. Nagpasalamat gyud diay ko ana dako sa Ginoo kay nabelong ko diri ani nga center. Gitagaan ko niya ug trabaho nga ing-ani gyud." (*I see it especially when I face the babies, I'm really very happy. I'm really very thankful to God that I belong here in this center. He gave me a job like this.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 70-81)

This is addressed in terms of the high rates of work satisfaction (Harris et al., 2023) and the increased connection and participation (Carvalho et al., 2022) of caregivers. This belongingness and appreciation help in the well-being and purpose of the houseparent in the institutional environment (exosystem), which is in tandem with Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The fact that the children refer to her as Mama legitimizes her position and makes her feel deeply connected emotionally, as Participant 5 shared:

"Sa akua...naay bili sa akua kay .....ma-feel nako nga naa...koy bili sa ilaha ... murag ma-hug ko nila ba. then bisan nalang 'gug tawgog "Mama."...ma-touch na ko ana." (*For me... it has value for me because... I feel that I have... value to them, as they hug me. then even just being called "Mama."... I get touched by that.*) (Participant 5, Interview 3, Page 2, Lines 36-37)

This supports the concept of attachment relationships (McGarry Feeney, 2023) and the emotional rewards of being a carer. The validation that comes with these interactions in the microsystem is a strong reward, and the houseparent enjoys the identity and meaning of the same.

The warm reception that the children give her on arrival, and that she is called Mama give a very overwhelming feeling of validation and belonging.

Participant 1 shared:

".. usahay sa balay feeling down kaayo ko pero pag-abot diri kay motagbo dayon na silang tulo...Ma feel bitaw nimo na validated ka...moana sila na "Mama..." (*...sometimes at home I feel very down, but when I arrive here, the three of them immediately meet me... You really feel validated... they say "Mama..."*) (Participant 1, Interview 3, Page 2, lines 65-69)

This brings to the face of the idea that loneliness is defeated by attachment relationships based on emotional support (McGarry Feeney, 2023). This direct and equivalent reward of personal feelings of sadness through this instant positive feedback within the microsystem overrides their role, which gives it a direct and meaningful reward.

To the other of the houseparents, it is a course of action that provides a maternal need that they could not completely achieve because of their workload with their own children:

Participant 1 narrated: "...Dili nako makabaylo ang akong pagka-house parent ana kay uhm though kapoy siya lisod siya kay naa man gyud mga restriction dili man parehas sa ... atoa gyud nga anak. Naa man tay dos and don'ts. Pero... isip bitaw ikaw, mama, kay ako na nanarbaho naman gyud ko nga... since nag-two years old gyud akong mga anak... wala gyud bitaw kaayo nako sila naatiman. So...fulfillment sya gihapon sa ako sa wala nako nabuhat sa akong mga anak..." (*...I wouldn't trade my being a houseparent for anything because uhm, although it is tiring, it is difficult because there are really restrictions, it is not the same as with our own children. We have dos and don'ts. But... as a mother, because I've been working since my children were two years old... I really wasn't able to take care of them much. So... it is still a fulfillment for me for what I wasn't able to do for my children...*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4-5, Line 148-160)

This addresses the Personal Vocation Journeys (Miranda et al., 2025) and the "making sense processes that are constrained by institutional limitations. This observation is heavily consistent with the Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959) because the houseparent derives a lot of meaning and satisfaction in the role that enables him/her to realise a personal value that has been long withheld, even when it was not fulfilled in the past. This too includes some kind of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983), as the houseparent invests her maternal emotions in her job, and actually derives great satisfaction in this deep acting.

The reward of the pride of being a Mama in the middle, when one has not quite had the same experience with his/her own children, is potent.

Participant 4 shared:

"Happy ko. Nga usa ko ka-house parent kay wala pa nako na-experience sa pagka-mama nako sa akong mga anak naa sad koy na-experience sa lahi nga bata...proud ko nga...nahimo ko diri sa sa center...Isa ka-mama." (*I'm happy. That I am a houseparent because I haven't experienced being a mother to my own children, but I also experienced it with other children... I'm proud that... I became here in the center... A mother.*) (Participant 4, Interview 2, Page 1, Lines 26-28)

This strengthens the high levels of work satisfaction (Harris et al., 2023) and fulfillment of making a difference (Lawson and Quinn, 2023). This pride and feeling of belonging as a Mama in the residential environment (microsystem) play a key role in the general feeling of meaning and purpose in the houseparent, which is in line with the Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

### **Theme 3: Sustaining Well-being Practice**

This theme explores the mindful efforts and plans houseparents make to sustain their mental, emotional, and professional balance in the face of the stressful environment of their work. These strategies play a central role in their survival and efficiency in the caregiving profession and are discernible to a great extent through the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). SDT assumes the relationship between well-being and motivation and the satisfaction of three human imperatives: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These practices by the houseparents directly serve to the realization of these fundamental psychological needs and thus keep them motivated and healthy.

#### **Category 1: Relatedness**

This category is important to nurture meaningful relationships and a feeling of belonging, both to the children in their care and their professional community. These bonds offer emotional rewards, familiarity, and a feeling of purpose, which is essential in maintaining health. This is consistent with the meaning of relatedness of SDT, which is the feeling of connection, belonging, and safety among individuals (Dombestein et al., 2020). The pursuance and upholding of these relationships are an active process that directly fulfills the basic need of relatedness of the houseparents.

Houseparents make a deliberate attempt to show love and care by talking softly to the children and modifying their ways so that they do not hurt them, as described by Participant 4:

"...ipakita nako sa ilaha... ang...pag-amuma nako sa ilaha, unsaon nako sila... ang akong...gipakita karon...mahinahong pagsulti...Gina-adjust ko akong kaugalingon. Gina-pugngan ko akong kaugalingon para dili na gyud ko makahatag sa ilaha og ... makapasakit sa ilaha. Then ipakita ko na pud sa ilaha nga love nako sila... pag-abot nako."Hi, mga anak ko, good morning! Love you!"Gipakita gyud nako sa ilaha." (*...I show them... my... nurturing of them, how I... what I show now... gentle speaking... I adjust myself. I restrain myself so that I won't really give them something that will hurt them. Then I also show them that I love them... when I arrive... I say, 'Hi, my children, good morning! Love you!'... I really show it to them.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 7, Line 219-229)

This is part of the emotional reward of being a carer, that the greater the attachment and the involvement with the cared for, the better (Carvalho et al., 2022), and turns into one of the solutions to loneliness in the relationship of attachment by the support of emotions (McGarry Feeney, 2023). By creating strong and positive relationships with the children, the houseparent will meet their need for relatedness directly through the intentional process of creating a loving and safe environment.

The principle of expressing sincere affection and being a true Mama helps to encourage children to love her, as narrated by Participant 4:

"...ingana ra gyud diay ang strategy sa pagpahinayhinay sa mga kabataan nga...love gyud nimo nga tinuod gyud ka nga Mama ba." Then makita pud dayon nimo siya nga pag-morning dayon nga, "Morning, Mama...! Love you!" (...*that's really the strategy to gently handle the children that... you truly love them, that you are a real Mama.*) Then you'll immediately see them in the morning saying, "Morning, Mama...! Love you!".) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 5, Line 138-141)

This illustrates how "SDT requires motivation and well-being of autonomous caregivers and relates to satisfaction of relatedness (Carvalho et al., 2022) should be fulfilled. The demonstrative affection and recognition on both sides of the children give good testimony to a successful connection, which directly satisfies the basic need of relatedness in the houseparent.

Houseparents have a desire to make children feel loved and taken care of, particularly since they will be temporarily staying. Participant 5 shared:

"... dili ko gakapoyon sa ilaha og atiman ay kay...gusto nako ipa-feel sa ilaha ba nga ... naa pa sila diri ma-atiman sila kay dili baya na sila permanente diri. Gusto nako ipa-experience sa ilaha ang murag ... love.." (*I don't get tired of taking care of them because... I want to make them feel that while they are still here, they are taken care of because they are not permanently here. I want them to experience that kind of love.*) (Participant 5, Interview 2, Page 4, Line 100-102)

This is an expression of the emotional advantages of being a carer (Carvalho et al., 2022) and the significance of constant attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969). The temporal nature of relationships between houseparents and children is driven by and satisfies their inherent need to feel related, which is sustained by the houseparent trying to offer love and care.

Communication and common consent to rules and relations are part of a harmonious environment, as described by Participant 3:

"... magkasinabot, magkasinabot sa tanang butang, sa mga rules, ang sa kung unsay angay buhaton. Tapos sa relationship, nga okay tanan, walay wala hinanakit." (*That we understand each other, understand everything, the rules, what should be done. And in the relationship, that everything is okay, no resentment.*) (Participant 3, Interview 3, Page 1, Line 19-20)

This helps in bringing about a favorable work environment (Chamberlain et al., 2024) and beneficial interprofessional work relations (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021). The development of effective communication and understanding between people helps create the feeling of belonging and safety, which directly addresses the SDT need of relatedness.

## Category 2: Competence

This category is dedicated to the quality of how the houseparents can handle the events of their workplace effectively and to deal with a variety of situations, especially by acquiring specialized skills and modifying their communication styles. This sense of competence plays a key role in their confidence and well-being in general, which is in line with SDT of competence, which is defined as a feeling of being useful in their continuing interaction with the social environment and experience opportunities of mastery (Williams et al., 2021). It is

important that the houseparents possess competence in their primary need, and this is only possible through constant establishment and use of these skills.

Houseparents adjust their communication styles to children who cannot hear, showing their ingenuity and a desire to communicate well, shared by Participant 2:

"Ang bungol siguro amang maka kuan man pud kay naa man tay naa man training sa una although dili...dili kay inana ka daghan ang natun-an pero ah so far maka...communicate man sa ilaha pinaagi sa pagtan-aw sa mga gestures or sa...iyahang buot ipasabot nga mga sinyales. Mga signs." (*Perhaps the deaf can also manage because we had training before, although not... not that much was learned, but ah so far we can... communicate with them by looking at their gestures or at... what they mean by their signals. Signs.*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 14, Line 433-436)

This emphasizes that effective caregiving is the issue of general non-verbal communication (Schuler and Feller, 2023) and the necessity of special sign language training of houseparents. The possibility of the houseparent to communicate effectively with all children, breaking barriers, directly fulfills his competence need by showing that he has mastered his job.

Talking to children, who might be visually resistant to verbal information, through the use of actions and gestures is also a feasible display of competence as described by Participant 4:

"Ako lang syang action actionan. Mag action lang ko nga ... ma sabtan niya..Mga hand gestures lang and kung dili pud gyud sya maka bantay akong estomp akong tiil para mag vibrate.. maka dungog or maka bantay sya kung naay vibration." (*I just act it out for him. I just act so that he understands... Just hand gestures, and if he really doesn't notice, I stomp my foot so it vibrates... he can hear or notice if there's a vibration.*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 23, Line 708-714)

This also justifies the applicability of the general non-verbal communication (Schuler and Feller, 2023) and the usefulness of the sign-supported speech. This creative adjustment of communication modes, which assures comprehension, literally adds to the feeling of competence and effectiveness of the houseparent in his dealings.

The use of diverse techniques of communication, such as writing and signing with a manual, demonstrates a malleable and adaptive attitude to caregiving. Participant 3 narrates:

"Ang mga simple nga mga actions mga sign language..Kung makabasa siya ako gyud ginasulat...dayon. Basa pud niya... So, kung saktosa mga ana-ana pud. (nodding) Mag yangoyango... ." (*The simple actions, sign language... If he can read, I really write it down... immediately. He also reads it... So, if it is correct for those things. (nodding)*) (Participant 3, Interview 1, Page 14, Line 412-417)

This highlights the role in communication (Williams et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2022) and the advantages of its special variant, sign-supported speech, in particular (Schuler and Feller, 2023). The skills and flexibility shown by the houseparent to use a wide variety of communication tools to reach an understanding directly satisfy their SDT need of competence.

### Category 3: Autonomy

The category examines how the houseparents can exercise discretion and make independent decisions in their job, balancing the institutional directives and their professional judgment and personal care approach. This feeling of self-direction and control is essential to their job enjoyment and performance, which is consistent with one of the ideas of SDT, which is autonomy as the idea of volitional action self-endorsed (Dudman et al., 2019). The ability of the houseparents to make decisions and take action that is in line with their values and objectives directly fulfills their basic need of autonomy.

Houseparents are proactive in their decision-making and use their time and attention to provide equal care to all children. Participant 2 described:

"So ah most of the time ang akong ga buhaton, ginacheck nako kanunay ang labi na...sa akong oras sa mga bata...basin ug...naka focus ra kayo ko atong isa ang uban dili o wala kaayo koy time sa ilaha, most of the time...gahatag ko ug time...pero kasagara wala...sa mga babaye para...nalang pud safety purposes most of the time sa mga lalaki ako gyud gina angay ang akong oras sa pag bonding...even sa pag desiplina kay basin ug...katong isa mejo naging unfair ko sa ila..." (*So, ah, most of the time what I do, I always check especially... my time with the children... in case... I focused too much on one, and the others didn't, or I didn't have much time for them, most of the time... I give time... but usually not... for the girls, for... safety purposes, most of the time for the boys I really adjust my time for bonding... even for discipline because maybe... I might have been a bit unfair to the others...*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 104-110)

This is indicative of the concept of the flexible response to the diverse health of residents (National Institute on Aging, 2021) and the significance of informed decision-making. This is because their SDT autonomy need is directly fulfilled through the houseparent being able to manage their time and attention independently and make decisions on how they see it best to meet the needs of all children.

The art of finding a balance between institutional regulations and individual approach toward children is an exercise of autonomy Participant 2 shared:

"...Balance...tungod kay...naa man pud koy...rules nga ginasonod. Naay standards nga pamaagi sa...pagdala sa mga bata. Pero at the same time, naa pud mga pamaagi nako nga...siguro sa pagkuan lang, pag-approach sa ilaha, oo, in a way nga ma...deal sila nga nakasubay gihapon sa...kung unsa ang standards or pamaagi nga gihatag...labi na sa...DswD..." (*...Balance...because...I also have...rules that I follow. There are standard ways of...handling the children. But at the same time, I also have my own ways of...maybe just in dealing, approaching them, yes, in a way that they are...dealt with still in accordance with...whatever standards or methods are given...especially by...DSWD...*) (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 2, lines 47-51)

This indicates the task complexity understanding meets particular residential care needs (National Institute on Aging, 2021) and the necessity of flexible response to various resident health needs. The ability of the houseparent to incorporate his or her own judgment and methods into the existing institutional system reflects the independence of the houseparent, which satisfies the SDT requirement of self-endorsed action. Using good techniques to prevent tantrums and to respond to the feelings of children who have already calmed down demonstrates independent problem solving Participant 1 narrated:

"...usahay ang bata man ' gud kay naa sila'y uh lisod kontrolon nga...kinaiyahan labi na og...mag-tantrum kung sila dili...makasabot sa ilahang sitwasyon....So ang usa...nga mga butang nga nakita nako nga effective nga pamaagi is.. Dili sabayan ang ilahang kasuko...Ipakalma na sila and then istoryahon pagkahuman.. sa ilahang.. gebate or kung panahon nga makalma na sila kay para nga ma-avoid...next nila nga panahon nga...moagi na pud sila or mubuhat na pud sila adto." (*...sometimes the child ' is difficult to control... their nature especially if... they throw tantrums if they don't... understand their situation....So one... of the things I found effective is... Don't match their anger... Calm them down and then talk to them afterwards... about their... feelings or when they are calm so that it can be avoided... the next time they... do it again or do it again.*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 4, Line 128-130,132-136)

This shows how the concepts of flexible response to various health needs of residents (National Institute on aging, 2021) and task complexity comprehension (Dudman et al., 2019) are put into practice. The SDT need of autonomy is directly fulfilled by the houseparent due to his or her independent decision-making and initiative to resolve the problematic behaviors on her own.

#### Category 4: Institutional Support

The role of the policies, procedures, and support systems that the residential facility is explored as a key factor in facilitating the efficient work of the houseparents and their well-being. Stress can be reduced; communication is enhanced and a more conducive environment in the provision of care with adequate institutional support. This is vital considering that, institutional strain (RA 11965, 2023) and policy-implementation gaps perpetuate

institutional strain are major challenges. The effectiveness of institutional support can promote the fulfilment of the needs of houseparents in terms of relatedness, competence, and autonomy.

Effective communication during shift changes is crucial to continuity of care and an effective facilitation of the needs of children Participant 1 shared:

"...dako kaayong tabang ang...proper communication labina ang sa turn over. Kay kung wala 'ah wala kay communication sa imong 'kauban nga maoy imong ka turn over...dako kaayo ug ikatabang labina sa imong pag facilitate sa bata for the rest of the day...Usa pud...ang polisiya sa logbook. Kay didto nimo makita kung unsa ang mga nahitabo just in case...naay nalimtan sa turn over so naa kay matan-aw naa kay Mabasa didto sa logbook..." (*...proper communication is a great help, especially during turnover. Because if there's no communication with your colleague during turnover... it helps a lot, especially in facilitating the child for the rest of the day... Also... the logbook policy. Because there you can see what happened just in case... something was forgotten during turnover, so you have something to look at, you can read it in the logbook...*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 9-10, Line 363-373)

This matches the significance of the interprofessional work-relations (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021) and the mediators of the empowerment of Care Assistants are social capital, leadership, and culture (Chamberlain et al., 2024). Effective communication and well-organized documentation offered by the institution also help the houseparents achieve a sense of competency and relatedness in the team.

The logbooks are an important instrument of monitoring the conditions and everyday activities of a child and making sure that they are accountable and in continuity.

Participant 5 described:

".. mag-logbook. Kung okay ba sila or dili. Unsa ilang gibuhad anang adlaw or nagsakit ba sila..." (*...the logbook. If they are okay or not. What they did that day or if they were sick...*) (Participant 5, Interview 1, Page 21-22, Line 637,639-640,642,644)

This is part of the "quality of care given by the care aides" (BMC Health Services Research, 2023) and the necessity to enhance the organizational situation in residential care institutions. Competence of the houseparents is assisted by the institutional supply of such tools as logbooks that allow efficiently tracking and managing care.

By allowing houseparents to relax and have emotional relief, the presence of support systems, such as stress debriefing, mental health awareness, and retreats, is greatly appreciated shared by Participant 1:

"Daghan silag support system....gawas sa,...stress debriefing ug ... mental health awareness, naa pud mi...retreat.. Nga maka-relax. Maka-out pud. Kauban...sa mga co-houseparents." (*They have a lot of support system....aside from,...stress debriefing and mental health awareness, we also have...retreat.. That can relax. Can also go out. Together...with co-houseparents.*) (Participant 1, Interview 2, Page 8, Line 242-246)

This directly agrees with the premise that the institutional support is one of the most significant factors in the enhancement of the performance of the caregivers and the necessity of the multidisciplinary approach to caregivers, adapted to their unique needs (Rocha and Arcinas, 2020). These support systems in the institutions promote relatedness among peers and also improve the general well-being of the houseparents, which indirectly aids their competence and autonomy.

The fact that the center head is responsive to staff issues and recommendations brings a great relief and alleviates stress described by Participant 2:

"...tungod kay...automatic man pud...maminaw ang center head. Kung unsa ang mga gapangbati-on sa staff. So, oo, isa man pud...mo, mo-tugot man pud...nga sige, pahulay sa ka or rest ka or unsa ba kaha ang mga...suggestion. So, usahay maka-kuan siya, maka-relieve siya, makatabang siya nga...makulangan ang imong stress kay

makaingon ka nga,..sinuportahan man...ma- relieve mi aning a stress nga among gapangbati-on." (...because...the center head automatically...listens. To what the staff is feeling. So, yes, it is also one...they, they also allow...that okay, you rest first or you rest or whatever...suggestions. So, sometimes it can...it can relieve, it can help that...your stress is lessened because you can say that,..we are supported...we are relieved of this stress that we are feeling.) (Participant 2, Interview 2, Page 5, lines 164-170)

This confirms the significance of social capital, leadership and culture as intermediaries of the empowerment of Care Assistants (Chamberlain et al., 2024) and the essential influence of a supportive working environment (BMC Health Services Research, 2023). The sense of relatedness and autonomy is the results of the responsive and supportive leadership that allows the houseparents to be listened to and taken into account, which directly contributes to their well-being and motivation following SDT.

#### **Theme 4: Transformation**

"kani nga ministry nga gihatag sa Ginoo..." (...this ministry given by God..) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 1, Line 31-43) expresses how houseparents interpret caregiving as a spiritual calling that sustains them through hardship.

This theme appeals to the highly spiritual and professional caregiving of houseparents. They do not see their work as a job but as a ministry or calling that gives meaning, satisfaction, and personal change. This view will overcome hardships when the service purpose is durable. This aligns with caregiving spirituality literature (Marek and Walulik, 2022; Esaki & Liu, 2023) and Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959) where the main driving force of motivation in life is the human search of meaning. Houseparents derive profound meaning from suffering.

#### **Category 1: Caregiving As Ministry**

This category brings out the spiritual reason and the divine purpose behind the dedication of the houseparents to their work. They also see their work as a divine calling; directed by faith and a sense of service; which has a potent source of strength and fulfillment. The Divine Purpose, Spiritual Mentoring, and Work as ministry codes are the key ones in this category. Such a conception of the work as a ministry is the direct reflection of the search for meaning through their vocation, which is one of the main ideas of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

To others, it is a direct calling of God, and they simply enjoy taking care of children. Participant 1 shared:

"...kani nga ministry nga gihatag sa Ginoo, diha gyud ko nag-start na fall in love sa pag-care sa mga bata." (...this ministry given by God, that's where I really started to fall in love with caring for children.) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 1, Line 31-43)

This also directly backs the concept of spiritual calling mediating 62% of the variance of service commitment (Esaki and Liu, 2023) and the notion of sense of calling, sustained by faith and teamwork, as the key resource of resilience in times of resource shortage (Garcia et al., 2025). This is the deeper sense of vocation to work, and it offers an ultimate goal, making them find a purpose and love in their work, which is one of the most important tenets of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The process of spiritual mentoring of children and seeing how they mature in faith is a very gratifying part of the job for Participant 2:

"Ah I think ang isa sa mga rewarding nga mga butang nga akong gibuhay isip isa ka houseparent is...pag-guide sa mga kabataan labina sa esperitohanon nga bahin labi na kung makita nako nga ... nag tubo sila... Kabalo na sila mo-ampoo daghan na sila ug memory verse nga gaka-recite gaka-kita nila ang ilahang .....kibale ah.. kakulangon...or kung unsa ang mga sayop nga ilang gaka buhat nga dili maka hatag ug kalipay sa parents labi na gyud sa Ginoo, kana isa na sya sa rewarding nga part para sa ako ah isip us ka staff diri sa facility." (Ah, I think one of the most rewarding things I do as a houseparent is... guiding the children, especially in the spiritual aspect, especially when I see that they are growing... They already know how to pray, they have many memory

*verses that they recite, they see their... what you call it... shortcomings... or whatever mistakes they make that don't bring joy to the parents, especially to God, that is one of the rewarding parts for me as a staff here at the facility.)* (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 2, Lines 60-65)

This is in line with the spiritual dimension of the analysis (Marek and Walulik, 2022). The view of spiritual growth and change in the children gives a high sense of meaning and achievement to the houseparent, which directly satisfies their purpose/search quest as presented by Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The perception of the work as a ministry and not merely a job is rather fulfilling and God-like for Participant 1:

"...gi-pray ko ni siya sa wala pa ko nag-apply. So, I do not consider this as a job pero as a ministry gyud. Fulfillment pud siya sa akua uh so dinhi ko gidala sa Ginoo.." (*...I prayed for this before I applied. So, uh I do not consider this as a job but as a ministry. It is also a fulfillment for me uh so God brought me here...*) (Participant 1, Interview 1, Page 2, Line 45-48)

This directly verifies the Personal Vocation Journeys (Miranda et al., 2025) and directly supports the attitudinal component of logotherapy relating to the meaning-making (Frankl, 1984). This self-conscious rearranging of their work to be a ministry and not a job gives it ultimate meaning and purpose, which is one of the main ideas of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The desire to teach, love, and willing to be utilized to take care of children are potent reasons to become part of the institution.

Participant 2 narrated:

"Ni join ko sa institution tungod kay unang una nag atiman sila sa mga kabataan ug isip usa ka...adunay kasing-kasing nga mo tudlo, adunay kaluoy sa mga bata, adunay kahangawa sa akua nga magpagamit ug mo atiman usab sa mga kabataan." (*I joined the Institution because first and foremost, they care for children, and as someone who... has a heart to teach, has compassion for children, has a concern for me to be used, and to also care for children.*) (Participant 2, Interview 1, Page 1, Lines 32-34)

This is the evocation of the sense of calling (Garcia et al., 2025) and the spiritual part of human growth and development. This fact is that such intrinsic motivations as compassion and the desire to serve are strong sources of meaning that drive the commitment of the houseparents, which is consistent with the things that Logotherapy suggests (Frankl, 1959).

## Category 2: Meaningful Service Engagement

This category explains how much personal fulfillment and sense of mission houseparents are willing to experience because of engaging in meaningful service. This is beyond just the job performance; it involves a sense of making a difference to the lives of the vulnerable children and making a contribution to the greater good. Affirmation of affection, Professional identity, and Professional growth were described by the houseparents. This proactive involvement of service in which houseparents derive deep creative significance in their work is one of the main features of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

The happiness of being a part of the institution and the fact that personal issues are not the focus because of taking care of children underline the therapeutic and valuable character of the work.

Participant 4 shared:

"...lipay kaayo ko kay nabilong ko ani nga.. center sa TP kay usahay naa ko'y problema sa balay, pagtrabaho nako nga murag mawala gani akong...problema...kay murag gakaipay ko sa mga kabataan nga gatan-aw..." (*...I'm very happy because I belong to this center, the TP, because sometimes I have problems at home, when I*

*work, it is like my...problems...disappear...because I feel happy with the children watching...*) (Participant 4, Interview 1, Page 3, Line 70-81)

This is in line with the fact that the meaningfulness was found to be the most important indicator of engagement in human service workers (Esaki & Liu, 2023) and the notion that caregivers are highly satisfied with their work (Harris et al., 2023). The ability of the work to give the feeling of happiness and a sense of purpose that exceeds individual challenges is a testament to its significance as seen through the lens of Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

Professional identity and satisfaction manifest as service they give to the work they provide.

Participant 5 described: "Garbo kaayo nako nga nagtrabaho baya ko didto sa Institution." (*I'm very proud that I worked there at the institution.*) (Participant 5, Interview 2, Page 8, lines 256-261)

Houseparents derive deep satisfaction from embodying a maternal role.

Participant 3 shared: "Happy ko. Nga usa ko ka-house parent kay wala pa nako na-experience sa pagka-mama nako sa akong mga anak naa sad koy na-experience sa lahi nga bata...proud ko nga... nahimo ko diri sa sa center... Isa ka-mama." (*I'm happy. That I'm a houseparent because I haven't yet experienced being a mom to my own children, but I also got to experience different children... I'm proud that... what I've become here at the center... A mom.*) (Participant 3, Interview 2, Page 1, Lines 26-28)

This is what the high levels of work satisfaction (Harris et al., 2023) and the professional growth (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al., 2021) can be promoted in the caregiving settings. This sense of pride in their work and the service they give to the work is what adds to the strong professional identity and a sense of meaning, which is the main focus of the Logotherapy (Frankl, 1959).

## **Exhaustive Description**

As the experiences of the houseparents in Bukidnon residential care facility show, caregiving is a complex existential navigation as the overwhelming polycrisis issues (simultaneous cries and wounds among children, unique trauma responses, resistance to chores, inconsistency of discipline) flout continuous balancing between multiple task demands and empathic responsiveness, which is strategically achieved by informing effective turnover protocols, use of logbooks, and institutional leadership support that avoids information gaps and emotional breakdown. At the same time, the relational rewards are created by the genuine "Love you, Mama" statements of children, school success achievements, and surrogate care assuming personal parenting deficiencies, evoking deep emotional reciprocity, and offsetting the reported burnout dangers. The well-being maintenance is in the form of purposeful Self-Determination Theory behaviors related to mellow morning love interactions, competence with sign language and vibration gestures in hearing-impaired children, autonomy balancing DSWD norms with de-escalation of tantrums, building conscious resilience infrastructure. These forces all combine in purposeful service interactions where seeing work as a ministry of the divine makes temporal labor an eternal spiritual nurturance, hugs and maternal affirmations are worth making the boundary between personal and professional identities, institutional service and personal development, and the recognition of purposeful fulfilment as consistent with transcendent values, observable child transformations, and divine vocation. These lived realities, taken together, tell us that houseparenting is not only professional responsibility in action but an advanced resilience architecture, continuously striving to negotiate the disorder of caregiving in the context of structural underpinnings, to nurture psychological prosperity in the context of relational reciprocity, and to foster the sense of purpose transcendence that both sustains the calling of houseparenting and also the children who are traumatized in residential houses and residential care settings in the Philippines.

## **Fundamental Structure**

The experience of houseparent working in a residential care facility is a dynamic process of continuum between care giving polycrisis, relational reciprocity, psychological resilience, and transcendent purpose, wherein nurturing traumatized children requires balancing overwhelming concurrent demands on the one hand with

empathetic trauma response on the other through explicit turnover procedures and logbook continuum which maintain well-being through purposely practiced triadic Self-Determination relatedness rituals, communication competence, autonomous flexibility, institutional support and finding fulfillment in divine ministry where the Love you, Mama this organization creates perpetuating resilience cycle wherein professional issues are the driving force of relational rewards to promote well-being practices that helps houseparents stay on course of delivering meaningful services despite the reported burnout risks in this framework, as well as, child development and the significant satisfaction of purpose-oriented work practices within the realities of Filipino residential care.

## Validation

Themes and exhaustive description were given to all five houseparents to carry out the member checking. The participants re-read the summaries of the findings and ensured that they were the real reminiscences of their lived experiences with minor clarifications, and that all five verbally agreed with the interpretations during follow-up. The validation process provided usefulness in the field of credibility and confirmability because the results would have a robust foundation of genuine voices of the participants.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND UTILIZATION

This chapter gives a concise summary of the findings of the study, concludes on the findings of the study through the thematic analysis, gives an overview of the practical and theoretical implications, presents actionable recommendations, discusses the limitations of the study, and gives a reflection on the research process and possible application of the research. The research results presented below are expected to provide profound information about the lived experiences of houseparents working in a residential care home, covering their difficulties, coping strategies, and motivation in their hectic work.

## Summary

The results of this phenomenological study on the lived experiences of houseparents in a residential care facility are as follows: “Biological, Social, Spiritual Adaptation”, “Rewards of Caregiving”, “Sustaining Well-being Practice”, and “Transformation”.

1. Houseparents in the Bukidnon residential care facility faced immense pressures that strain their emotional, physical, and professional boundaries.
2. Houseparents also gained tremendous gratification in their jobs regardless of the challenges, and this changes fatigue to emotional fulfillment. These rewards include: Joy and surrogate parenting.
3. Houseparents are aware of using multifaceted practices to sustain their well-being in the face of emotional and physical strain of the job. These are practices that are based on the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs (relatedness, competence, and autonomy) and institutional support.
4. Houseparents transform the stress of caregiving into meaningful service engagement that fosters transcendence beyond material concerns.

## Conclusion

This lived experience study demonstrates complex dynamics, emotional needs, and satisfaction in houseparents. Houseparents attain wellness with coping mechanisms and meaningful service in spite of walking the fine line between professional limits and emotional attachments, and this is decisively facilitated by institutional support.

The results confirm the four theoretical frameworks of the study:

Houseparents are ecologically guided to maneuver through microsystems (child interactions/traumas), mesosystems (staff coordination), and exosystems (institutional policies/resources) with the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Systemic factors are highlighted by resource limits and complicated histories of children. The theory of Emotional Labor (Hochschild, 1983) describes the causes of psychological strain in the management of emotions to satisfy the needs of different children, which may result in compassion fatigue during the process of making decisions and overload.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) illustrates how the houseparents receive institutional support that satisfies their needs for Relatedness, Competence, and Autonomy.

A meaning can be seen in logotherapy, which Frankl (1959) describes as transcendent, divine service, making stress meaningful beyond material matters.

Houseparents flourish through community assistance, emotional control, spirituality, and family-like relations with children. The institutional support, which is disseminated throughout all four frameworks, becomes central to resilience, satisfaction, and continued vocational fulfillment.

### **Implications**

The overwhelming responsibility of houseparents in residential care homes is directly linked to the significant emotional, psychological, and practical problems, as they need effective support systems that would enhance the quality of life and work. Such issues require a complex intervention, and it should start with improved mental health support and peer-based support. There is a dire need to put in place well accessible and confidential mental health services, including counseling and stress management programs, but with a specific focus to assist houseparents in dealing with emotional labor and compassion fatigue. Such frequent debriefing and clinical supervision sessions are essential to allow houseparents to cope with tough experiences and consult with experts.

Moreover, there should be improved staffing and resource allocation to avoid incessant overworking and burnout. The facilities should examine and review the staffing ratios to make sure that the houseparents are not constantly overwhelmed with tasks and provide enough resources to provide personalized care and reduce the chances of work burnout.

Training and professional development are also essential, especially in the area of trauma-informed care, so that the houseparents have the knowledge they need to recognize and respond efficiently to the children with various backgrounds and histories of trauma. This training ought to be geared towards emotional control techniques, stress management, and self-care techniques to enhance their personal psychological well-being, and problem-solving and making high-pressure decisions in caregiving situations.

The most important step is to develop a favorable working environment. The positive wellness practices should be encouraged, and the importance of houseparents as priceless values must be formally stated to make them more satisfied with their work and their general well-being. This kind of environment promotes compassion satisfaction that is a potent protective measure against occupational stress.

Theoretically, these observations contribute greatly to the already existing models of caregiving in that they focus on the complex interaction between both personal factors, including coping styles and religious beliefs, and systemic conditions, such as institutional support and cultural contexts, which significantly influence the experiences of houseparents. Herein, the complexity of houseparenting as the professional roles are strongly interconnected with a strong emotional attachment is emphasized, with affective work being very essential in this position of a houseparent. The study also provides useful phenomenological insights on how people in discomposing situations derive meaning out of hardship, especially under spiritual frames and satisfying relationships. This can be added to the theory of resiliency and work based on purpose and meaning, showing that even though it is as complicated as it is, caregiving can be a way of deep meaningfulness and satisfaction.

These emotional and psychological requirements are further increased by the continuous nature of the houseparent role, which is referred to as being like their parents all their lives, and thus continuous support and understanding of their individual contributions is critical to successful residential care.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered to increase the level of efficiency and welfare of the houseparents working in residential care facilities:

### 1. Enhance Mental Health and Institutional Nurturance of Houseparents:

- **Mental Health Services:** If not already provided in the institutions, administrators and program coordinators make mental health services (mental health counseling and stress management programs) easily available and confidential, with services specifically tailored to the emotional labor and compassion fatigue of houseparents.
- **Regular Debriefing and Supervision:** Institution social workers and supervisors introduce regular, formal debriefing and supervision of houseparents to enable them to work through difficult situations, get professional advice, and acquire effective coping mechanisms to address complicated cases.
- **Adequate Staffing and Resource Distribution:** Policy makers and administrators engage in an extensive analysis and revision of the policy on staffing and resource distribution to make sure that houseparents are not constantly overworked so that they can give one-on-one care to the patient and avoid burnout.

### 2. Invest in Professional Development and Training:

- **Medical and First Aid Training:** Administrators and experts of the field offer medical training, especially first aid training to children, and how to deal with common childhood ailments (e.g., how to deal with fever). This will allow houseparents to act decisively when dealing with immediate health issues in response to the problem, which will make them less anxious and enhance care.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Administrators and Experts provide continuous, specialized training on trauma-informed care to prepare houseparents with the advanced knowledge and skills in comprehending, detecting, and responding to children who have undergone different kinds of trauma.
- **Communication Skills, Sign language:** Experts introduce training programs in the area of communication skills, generally and sign language in particular, among houseparents. This will enhance communication with deaf children or those with communication difficulties, thus understanding and relating better.
- **Emotional Regulation and Self-Care:** Social workers should design and offer emotional management techniques, stress reduction, and self-care activities and workshops to equip houseparents to care effectively about their own emotional health and change their behavior in challenging circumstances.
- **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills:** Administrators and program coordinators develop and enforce training interventions that directly develop quick decision-making and problem-solving skills when responding in high-pressure caregiving conditions.
- **Advanced Caregiving Knowledge:** Administrators and experts provide chances to the houseparents to constantly broaden their knowledge base in their work, on various aspects of child care and development, to provide a broader expertise and confidence.

### 3. Create Community and Peer Support Systems:

- **Peer Support Groups:** Social workers and program coordinators should assist in the development of formal or informal peer support groups in which the houseparents can share experiences and discuss coping mechanisms, and offer each other encouragement and understanding.
- **Community Engagement:** Social workers and program coordinator Proactively encourage and facilitate the participation of houseparents in community work with a view to instilling a sense of belonging, minimizing the feeling of isolation, and the perceived support of the community to the important work that houseparents perform.

### 4. Determine and Develop the Notable Things regarding the Position:

- **Value-Based Recognition:** Administrators and program coordinators are recommended to have recognition programs that recognize and honor selfless service, relational fulfillment, and spiritual dedication by houseparents.
- **Opportunities to Reflect:** Administrators and program coordinators Provide set of time and places where houseparents can be reminded about the purposeful sides of their work, and reaffirm their purpose and the value of the work they do.

### 5. Future Research:

- Future multi-site phenomenological studies across urban and rural Philippine residential care facilities (n=8-12 houseparents) would enhance transferability and generalizability beyond the current single-site design at TP Residential Care Facility (Bukidnon).

## Limitations

This study's single-site design at TP Residential Care Facility (Bukidnon) prioritized phenomenological depth over breadth, potentially limiting transferability to diverse Philippine contexts (e.g., urban vs. rural facilities) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purposive sample of five experienced houseparents achieved data saturation per Colaizzi (1978), yet multi-site research with 8–12 participants would enhance generalizability. Rich contextual details (Chapter 3) enable the reader's judgment of applicability. As with all self-reported qualitative data, recall bias or social desirability may influence findings despite member checking, reflexivity, and confidentiality measures. Results reflect these participants' experiences, not all houseparents universally.

## Reflections and Utilization

In my Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) course, doing this research was a challenge between academic and personal demands, dealing with the complexity of the qualitative data analysis process, and making sure that the ethical issues were taken into account. Through these challenges, my unending drive came as a result of the support of my mentors, colleagues, family, and friends. I would have been lost without the direction and support of my research advisor, mentors, friends, and family, which played a critical role in helping me to maneuver through the webs of this phenomenological investigation. Among the key challenges was the need to make sure that the voices of participants were authentic and, at the same time, academically rigorous, as well as the emotional experience of hearing the difficult experiences of participants. This process even made me spend hours and hours trying to make the interpretations more perfect and think long and hard about my personal biases, which emphasizes the severity of the research process. I have found it useful to practice common bracketing exercises, seek advice from qualified professionals, keep an elaborate auditing trail to solve such dilemmas, and make the study methodologically sound. Being a researcher, it was not always easy to organize ideas and be objective, especially when it concerned some themes that were closer to personal experiences. Nevertheless, the studies and their results can be of great importance to offer insights into the plight and success of the houseparents in their caregiving functions, as well as their own well-being and meaning-seeking. This

study provides a background for any future investigation and better support provisions. The purpose is to disseminate the study results to the main participants, TP residential care facility management, local social welfare agencies, caregiver support organizations, child welfare policymakers, and Area-Based Standards Network (ABSNET) to facilitate a better comprehension of issues and strengths of houseparents and inform future support programs and policy building.

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